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Gaza/Jericho accord to be signed today

Anatomy of the autonomy

ALON PINKAS

What exactly are Israel and the PLO signing today?

They are signing an agreement on implementing the first phase of the Gaza and Jericho Declaration of Principles, which provides for Israeli withdrawal and the redeployment of the IDF, effectively ending Israeli political control and transferring power to the Palestinians.

The 250-page agreement, to be signed nearly a month after the original April 13 date decided upon in Oslo, includes four appendices: security, legal, civilian, and economic. In essence, it begins the process of the establishment of the Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority (PISGA).

What is the extent of the Palestinian authority's territorial jurisdiction?

The Palestinians will take control of the entire Gaza Strip, excluding three areas of Israeli settlement - Gush Katif in the south, an area in the north, and two lone settlements, Netzarim and Kfar Darom.

The exact size of Jericho has not been determined, but will include a corridor leading to Ouja. It will also include Moshav Na'ama, but no Israeli settlement will be dismantled at this point.

What is the timetable for implementation?

Within the general timetable determined by the Oslo accord, the two sides set a separate timetable, by which Gaza and Jericho will be evacuated no later than three weeks from today.

Within one year, the Palestinians are to hold elections for the autonomy council, after which the remaining phases will be implemented. Approximately 2,000 Palestinian policemen are expected to enter Gaza and Jericho tomorrow to begin the process transferring power from Israel to the Palestinian Authority.

To where will the IDF redeploy, and how will it conduct its activities?

It is important to distinguish between the relatively simple deployment and operations in Jericho and the complex reality in Gaza. Thus, most problems refer to Gaza.

Practically, the IDF dismantled its headquarters and installations and no longer maintains a permanent presence in heavily populated areas. The IDF will be using five main arteries in the Gaza Strip: one running from south of Kibbutz Yad Mordechai and ending at Netzer Hahani in Gush Katif, and four running east to west.

The northernmost will run from the Sa'ad junction and intersect with the main north-south road inside Gaza City. The second will lead from just south of Kibbutz Be'eri, intersect with the main north-south road, and end in Netzarim. The

third will start in Kibbutz Kissufim and intersect with the north-south road just north of Kfar Darom. The southernmost road will cross into Gaza near Kibbutz Nir Yitzhak and end in Morag.

Border stations will be established at all crossing points.

In the Jericho area, the IDF will redeploy around the city and on the Jordan River, due east of it. A bypass road is planned to enable the IDF, as well as civilians, to go around the city.

IDF patrols will be allowed to open fire if fired upon, and pursue fugitive into unspecified - in size - areas adjacent to the roads.

What will the IDF-PLO cooperation be like?

As part of the agreement's security appendix, Israel and the PLO established a security and liaison cooperation committee. Intelligence exchanges on violent Hamas activists and renegade Fatah groups are expected, as well as coordination on the joint patrols. The sides have agreed that suspects will be reported to joint operations rooms, and both sides will subsequently have the right of interrogation.

What is the role and authority of the Palestinian police?

Most of the 8,000-man force are former PLA members, trained in Jordan and Egypt. Their equipment (including two helicopters, one light plane, jeeps, and small arms) was donated primarily by Norway, the US, and Egypt. The names of prospective policemen were submitted to Israeli authorities and all but a few have been approved.

According to the Oslo agreement, Israel retains exclusive responsibility for external security, thus leaving the Palestinian police force with the responsibility of maintaining law and order. The Palestinians will have rights to patrol up to three nautical miles off the coast of Gaza, but every takeoff or landing in Gaza will require clearance with the Israeli authorities.

The police will have full authority and jurisdiction over the Palestinian population, but no authority over Israeli civilians living in Gaza or entering the autonomous areas, regardless of the nature of the alleged offense.

What is the status of Israeli civilians inside the autonomous areas?

Those living in settlements are subject to Israeli law and will have no legal or bureaucratic ties to the Palestinian Authority. Israeli vehicles, excluding those of Israeli residents in the autonomous areas, are prohibited from entering Gaza or Jericho unless they obtain a special one-time pass from the Israeli authorities.



Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, and Leah Rabin arrive in Cairo yesterday for the signing ceremony. (AP)

Marathon talks held on unresolved issues

DAVID MAKOVSKY
CAIRO

PRIME Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat held last-minute talks last night on unresolved issues, but senior officials are confident that remaining obstacles will be overcome or deferred before this morning's signing ceremony for the Gaza/Jericho First accord.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and the chief Israeli and Palestinian negotiators, Maj. Gen. Amnon Shahak and Nabil Sha'ath, joined Rabin and Arafat in the last-minute talks which were expected to continue through the night.

Their advisers were in the hallway, and were called in as needed.

"Even if [all the problems] are not solved, the time has a limit. By 11 [a.m.] tomorrow, we shall sign," Peres said.

He said it was "normal" to have a crisis before the signing, referring to the last-minute differences between Israel and the PLO.

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, who has been a member of the negotiating team, added: "We previously overcame many crises, and we are going to overcome this particular crisis."

Many foreign ministers have descended on Cairo for the ceremony, which will provide Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak an opportunity to showcase Egypt's role in the peace process.

Among the participants are US Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, and Norwegian Foreign Minister Bjorn Tore Godal.

Foreign ministers from several Arab countries, including Morocco, Tunisia, Oman, Bahrain, and Qatar, are also expected to arrive for the signing.

It appears Syria will snub a request to send a representative to protest the separate Israeli-Palestinian peace accord worked out in Oslo.

Aides traveling with Arafat indicated that of the 24 major and minor issues that remained unresolved yesterday morning, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators resolved all but six.

It is believed that the remaining issues include: the size of Jericho (Palestinians want to enlarge the agreed 55 sq. km.), whether a Palestinian policeman will be deployed on the Allenby Bridge, the extent of Gaza's territorial waters, and the prisoner release.

Both sides seem to be heading towards a formula that would formally allow an estimated 3,000 Hamas prisoners to be released, but in practice is likely to keep virtually all of them behind bars. Specifically, Hamas prisoners could only be released if they both renounce terrorism and pledge fealty to the Middle East peace process, something Hamas members are not likely to do.

Palestinian negotiators would like Israel to agree that the estimated 450 convicted Palestinian murderers from all different factions be afforded the same opportunity to sign a written pledge. Israel rejects this.

Meanwhile, Christopher said that Syria has provided Israel with details of a peace proposal, but "very considerable gaps remain" before a settlement can be reached.

Christopher said he plans to return to the Middle East in mid-May. "It's more detailed than it was before," Christopher told reporters on the flight from Jerusalem to Cairo, the Associated Press reported.

"I don't want to mislead you that the parties are close together," he said.

Protesters plan counter signing ceremony in Jericho

BILL HUTMAN

PROTESTERS from throughout the country converged on Jericho last night in a last-ditch effort to block the Gaza/Jericho First agreement.

Dozens of protesters evaded army roadblocks and patrols and succeeded in entering Jericho, protest organizers said.

The protesters were camping out near the Shalom Al Yisrael synagogue in the city, where they hope to hold a counter ceremony this morning at 11 to sign a "covenant of loyalty to the Land of Israel," while the accord with the PLO is being signed in Cairo.

Soldiers surrounded the synagogue, keeping the protesters from entering. At Moshav Mitzpe Yericho, over 200 protesters, mainly youths, were also waiting to enter the city after evading army roadblocks to get there.

"The prime minister has decided to turn over Jericho; we are here to accept it," said Nissan Slominsky, heading the protest for the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza.

No arrests or incidents were reported last night as the protesters

descended on the town in a military-style operation.

Hundreds of soldiers were called in as the army attempted to bar the protesters from Jericho. But organizers vowed to use back roads and even walk to the city if necessary, and to maintain a vigil there to protest the agreement.

"We will stay here as long as we have to," said Slominsky.

The protesters' main target was the synagogue, which they charged the army was abandoning. Organizers called on the protesters not to resort to violence, but cautioned that they would not leave of their own volition.

At Moshav Yerid Yericho, residents were infuriated by the army's closing off Jericho, and not being allowed to reach their fields that lie within the city limits.

"We have 400 dunams of orchards that we cannot reach," said Yehial Hadas, 45. "The orchards won't survive many days without our care," he said.

"I'm not against the peace process, but if there is real peace, then why can't I go work in my fields?" he asked.

Last-ditch effort to avoid doctors' strike

JUDY SIEGEL

ISRAEL Medical Association and Treasury representatives were meeting late last night to try to avert a two-day strike by the country's public-sector physicians, due to begin this morning at 7.

The strike is to protest the government's "footdragging" on a new wage agreement to replace the one which expired in December.

The strike will affect all government, Kupat Holim Clalit and voluntary hospitals, but not Netanya's Laniado Hospital, which has a no-strike clause in workers' contracts. There will be no doctors in health fund community clinics, hospital outpatient clinics will not function, and only emergency operations will be performed.

Independent doctors who receive health fund patients in their private clinics are also supposed to take part in the strike, although union enforcement of this sector is

weaker than in the other locations.

Finance Ministry wage chief Shalom Grant was meeting with Israel Medical Association officials at IMA headquarters in Tel Aviv last night. Earlier in the day, Finance Minister Avraham Shohat invited the IMA to an unscheduled meeting, during which he declared that negotiations could be carried out without the need for sanctions. "Solutions are more difficult to reach in a crisis atmosphere," Shohat said.

The IMA wants higher wages, a shorter work week and special compensation for doctors in specialties that involve especially difficult conditions, including internists and geriatricians. The IMA claims that doctors' per-hour wage is significantly below that of nurses in the same departments.

Soldier wounded in Gaza Strip attack

JON IMMANUEL

GUNMEN attacked an army patrol close to the Green Line, near the Kissufim junction on the edge of the Gaza Strip last night, wounding one soldier, the IDF said.

The IDF said the soldier was in satisfactory condition. The attackers fled towards Khan Yunis. Several recent attacks have occurred along the Green Line in the region, or on the road between Gaza and Gush Katif, from where gunmen can escape back into what

will be Palestinian-controlled territory.

According to the late drafts of the Cairo agreements, gunmen who escape back to Palestinian-controlled territory or are first time offenders are to be apprehended and tried by the Palestinian National Authority.

Military sources said they could not comment on the procedures for apprehending suspects in such cases until the agreement is signed.

Soldier killed by friendly fire

ALON PINKAS

SGT Shimshon Zeidner was mistakenly shot to death by another soldier in a Gaza Strip army base early Monday morning.

Shortly after 12:30 a.m. Monday, Zeidner, 20, from Rishon LeZion, was shot by another soldier who mistook him for an infiltrator.

Under questioning, the soldier said he spotted an armed figure

wandering outside the base's kitchen. The soldier immediately opened fire and killed Zeidner.

The Military Police Criminal Investigation Division began investigating the circumstances of the incident, which took place in an army base in the northern part of the Gaza Strip.

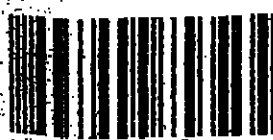
The CID are not ruling out that the soldier who opened fire did not adhere to standard opening-fire procedures, nor are they discounting the possibility that he did not ask Zeidner to halt as required.

Zeidner was buried yesterday in the military section of the Rishon LeZion cemetery.

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Saguy: Terror may escalate in rest of territories after accord implemented

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat stands a good chance of establishing a Palestinian state in the territories if he succeeds in governing effectively and preventing internecine warfare during the interim period, Maj.-Gen. Uri Saguy, head of army intelligence, predicted yesterday.

In a briefing to the Knesset foreign affairs and defense committee, Saguy added that terrorism against Israeli targets in Judea and Samaria and inside the Green Line will not abate, and may escalate after the Gaza/Jericho First accord is implemented.

According to Knesset sources, Saguy said the PLO would not try to prevent Hamas from continuing its terrorist campaign outside the autonomous areas. For its part, Hamas will cooperate with the PLO and seek an active role

DAN IZENBERG

in the administration of Gaza and Jericho, while continuing its operations against Israel in the rest of the country.

Saguy said Arafat stood a good chance of achieving his goal of a Palestinian state if he succeeded in the following:

- Providing security to the Palestinian population under his control and preventing internecine warfare.
- Providing effective government and administration.
- Mobilizing enough money to implement his programs.

"If Arafat passes these three tests and feels strong, he may be able to succeed in his mission to establish a Palestinian state," Saguy was quoted as telling the legislators. He added that the Gaza/Jericho First implementation agreement due to be signed today has advanced the Palestinians' campaign for an independent state.

According to Saguy, the second phase of the interim agreement may be so difficult to achieve that the sides will agree to skip directly to the third stage - negotiating the final status of the territories.

While Arafat and his colleagues will remain the representative leadership of the Palestinians, a new cadre of local leaders may develop from the younger generation of local Palestinians who led the intifada and spent time in jail, said Saguy.

Strip getting \$492 million. The contributions will be budgeted primarily through the new Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR). However, they will be overseen by the World Bank because "the donors want accountability; they want to know that their funds are being well-spent," Kuch-Weser said.

Sewer construction and solid waste management will be the first projects tackled this year, the report stated.

In addition, the roads serving the Palestinian population "need immediate attention" and the water systems "are in urgent need of upgrading," it noted.

World Bank sets \$1.2b. initial grant to territories

HILLEL KUTTLER
WASHINGTON

SOON after the Israel-PLO accord is signed in Cairo today, \$1.2 billion will begin flowing into the territories to rebuild infrastructure and attract foreign investment, the World Bank announced yesterday.

The funds, to be disbursed through the bank over the next three years, represent the first installment of the \$2.4 billion pledged here by 43 countries last October 1 at an international donors conference to support Palestinian autonomy.

In a report released here yesterday, the World Bank said the entire \$2.4 billion will be distributed over the next five years and will likely comprise 15 percent of the

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the territories.

"If the peace process has any hope of success, the Palestinians need to see improvements in their living conditions very quickly," said Caio Koch-Weser, the World Bank's vice-president for the Middle East, in releasing the 36-page Emergency Assistance Program for the Occupied Territories.

"The international community is betting that this program can jump-start the Palestinian economy over the next three years," he said.

Following the signing of the Declaration of Principles last September, the World Bank produced a six-volume report in which it outlined the infrastructure needs in the territories. The new report, however, is the first to quantify those needs with the amount raised by the world community last October.

In the first year of funding, \$393 million will be provided, \$379 million in the second year, and \$428 million in the third. The West Bank will receive \$708 million of the \$1.2 billion, with the Gaza

Strip getting \$492 million.

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Palestinians anxiously await appointments to autonomy council

LAMIAH LAHOUD

PALESTINIANS in the territories are suspicious of the autonomy agreement which will be signed today, and are anxiously awaiting the nominations to the autonomy council.

Support for the agreement depends on the council appointments, said Ahmed Edik, a Fatah leader and one of the deportees who returned last month. His return caused a lot of attention, because his wife Hannan Wazir is the daughter of assassinated PLO leader Abu Jihad (Khalil Wazir).

Edik said that Palestinians in areas not yet under Palestinian self-rule fear that Israel and the Palestinian authority in Gaza and Jericho will ignore their fate once the accord is signed.

Nominations which will give Palestinians in areas not yet under self-rule the feeling that the council represents them, too, will make it easier for Fatah leaders to convince the people that the Gaza-Jericho agreement is only a beginning, according to Edik.

"If the people in the West Bank trust the Palestinian authority in

cause his wife Hannan Wazir is the daughter of assassinated PLO leader Abu Jihad (Khalil Wazir). Edik said that Palestinians in areas not yet under Palestinian self-rule fear that Israel and the Palestinian authority in Gaza and Jericho will ignore their fate once the accord is signed.

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"If the people in the West Bank trust the Palestinian authority in

Gaza and Jericho, they will believe us when we tell them that Palestinian self-rule will soon extend to the rest of the West Bank and east Jerusalem, and that this will eventually lead to a state."

There are 24 seats on the council, half of them will go to Palestinians from the territories and half to PLO officials from outside. Local Palestinians from all factions suspect that Yasser Arafat will pack the council with people loyal to him, many of whom may not have the support of the population.

Some appointments have already been made, according to well informed Fatah sources. But Hassan Asfour, a delegate to the autonomy talks, said that nothing is final, and that Arafat may change the names. So far, Palestinian sources said that Hakam Balawie, the PLO's ambassador to Tunis, will be in charge of security.

Nasser Youssef, a member of the Fatah central committee of Fatah and general of the Palestinian Liberation Army, will head the police; Im Jihad, the wife of Abu Jihad, will be in charge of women's affairs; Yasser Amr, a Fatah member from Jordan, will head education. Also likely to be nominated are Ahmed Khoury (Abu Ala), who headed the Palestinian team at the economic talks, and Yasser Abed Rabbo, the leader of the Palestinian Democratic Union.

Among the local Palestinians on the council, according to well informed sources, are Faisal Hussein, who may be Arafat's deputy, Saeb Erakat, Zakaria Agha, and Azmeleh Shehadeh. Hassan Abu Libdi, the deputy managing director of the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction, and Mohammed Stehleh and Abdel Rahman Hamad are also considered possible members.

Little excitement in Gaza

JON IMMANUEL

THERE was little excitement in Gaza yesterday, except among reporters expecting to find it among the 750,000 people who were on the brink of achieving self-rule for the first time.

"It's just like any other day," said a boy sitting on a wall. "People are still skeptical that something might happen to stop the signing," explained Dr. Eyad Sarraj, who heads the Gaza mental health center, a few yards from one of the police posts that is expected to fly a Palestinian flag tomorrow. "There will be celebrations, but not on the scale of Madrid or Oslo. People don't know what they are heading for. It's not unusual after a prolonged period of stress."

Several representatives of the PLO office met OC Southern Command Maj.-Gen. Matan Vilnay and told him they are not ready to take over the military installations vacated by the IDF. They said that only the higher military committee whose representatives had not yet arrived had the authority to do so.

The first sign of change is expected to occur tomorrow when five police stations are scheduled to change hands. The police emblem will show a Palestinian flag, the Dome of the Rock, two olive branches, and a Koranic verse, "God make this country safe," the daily *Al-Kuds* reported.

Man arrested in protest over Jaffa dig

RAINE MARCUS and ABRAHAM RABINOVICH

A HAREDI man who allegedly attacked a policeman during a violent protest over excavations in Jaffa was arrested yesterday. Sixteen haredim were detained, but later released.

Around 200 haredim began protesting yesterday morning at the site on Rehov Yefet, and at one stage blocked traffic. The protest began when Antiquities Authority workers continued digging at the site designated for the construction of an apartment block.

Last week, police and haredim reached an agreement allowing excavation to continue as long as no graves were disturbed. The haredim claim the graves are Jewish, and the agreement has been violated. The Antiquities Authority says the site is a former Christian cemetery.

An Antiquities Authority spokeswoman said excavations will resume as soon as police restore order. She said the graves are clearly not Jewish, dating from the Byzantine and Persian periods. "The Jewish cemetery of Jaffa is at Abu Kabir, not there," she said.

The spokeswoman said the authority had agreed to suspend work on two graves in contention as long as work proceeds in the rest of the area. Yesterday's disturbance, she said, was in the area in which it had been agreed that the archaeologists could continue work.

3 held in murder of money changer

RAINE MARCUS

THREE men suspected of murdering a woman money changer in February were remanded for 15 days by Tel Aviv Magistrates Court yesterday.

The three - David Cohen, 27, of Ashkelon, Gabi Gabrielov, 32, of Tel Aviv, and David Ohavon, 29, of Kiryat Malachi - are already in custody for an alleged series of violent robberies of elderly people in the Tel Aviv area.

Pessia Heseled, 70, known as a black market currency dealer, was found strangled in her Rishon Le-Zion apartment. The murderers left it in disarray, apparently in their search for cash, but it is unclear if anything was stolen.

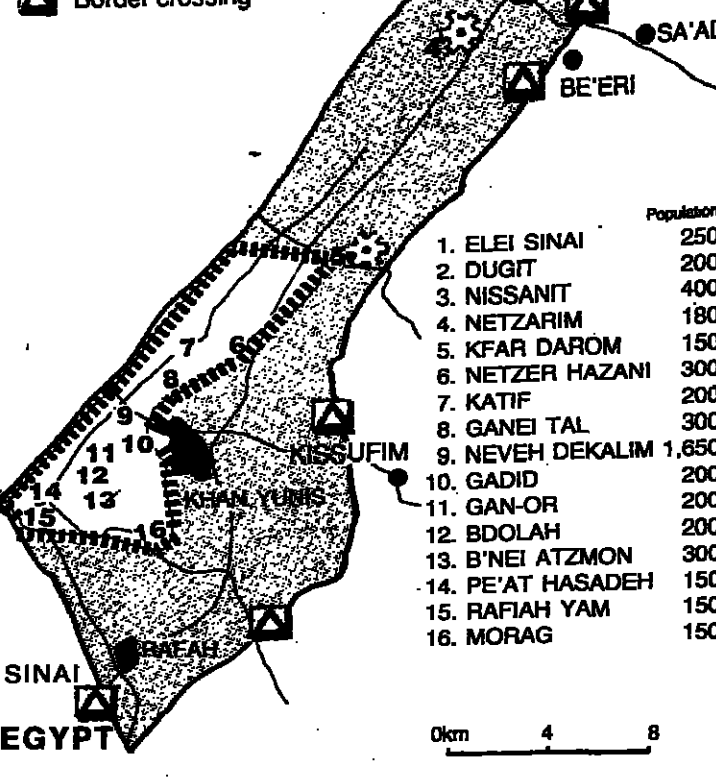
The suspects were caught red-handed last month in an elderly man's apartment. They had tied him to his bed and were beating him in an effort to find out where he had hidden his savings. The gang is allegedly responsible for several similar robberies, and also allegedly carried out a series of apartment and office burglaries in the Jerusalem and Tel Aviv areas.

Winning numbers

IN last night's weekly Lotto drawing, the winning numbers were 4, 18, 25, 33, 41, and 45, and the additional number was 23.

GAZA DISTRICT

- Settlement inside autonomous area
- Autonomous area
- Gush Katif
- Border crossing



Rabbis: Jews not bound to agreements giving up Eretz Yisrael

LIAT COLLINS

THE Jewish people will not be bound by an agreement which concedes its rights to the Land of Israel, the Rabbinical Conference of the Religious Zionist Rabbis Association declared yesterday.

The statement was issued by former chief rabbi Avraham Shapira and Rabbis Shaul Yisraeli, Moshe Zvi Neria and Yosef Kapach during an emergency meeting on the Gaza/Jericho pact.

"The government of Israel is not empowered by Jewish law, tradition or heritage to relinquish the rights of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel, and any agreement leading to such a relinquishment have no moral or legal status and are not recognized as binding by the Jewish people," the rabbis said in a written statement.

About 1,000 of the association's 1,500 members gathered for the conference at Jerusalem's Ramada Renaissance Hotel. The association's leaders recently issued a halachic ruling forbidding soldiers to evict Jews from settlements.

During his speech, Shapira said a withdrawal from the territories would create "another Diaspora from the Land of Israel."

Speaking before the meeting, Har Not Rabbi Shalom Gold said, "The so-called peace agreement endangers not only the lives of individual Jews but also the State of Israel."

of Israel." He said the conference was intended "to unite, encourage and give strength to Jews opposed to the plan."

Like his peers, he warned of a growing division in society around the Jericho/Gaza pact and blamed Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin for causing this rift.

His sentiments were echoed by Rabbi Mordechai Rabinowitz, head of the Shalom Al Yisrael Yeshiva in Jericho, whose students have been banned by the OC Central Command from re-entering their synagogue from today.

"As far as we're concerned the agreement is null and void," he said. Rabinowitz said the IDF had informed them that it would not continue to guard the site.

At the end of the conference, a list of resolutions was passed which includes setting aside today as a day of fasting and prayer.

Haim Shapiro adds: In a related development, former Ashkenazi chief rabbi Shlomo Goren yesterday issued a halachic ruling that all agreements made with Arafat and the PLO were null and void according to Jewish law.

Goren said yesterday that the sages agreed that according to Halacha it was forbidden to make a covenant with terrorists and give them a foothold in the Land of Israel.

Protesting Jordan Valley settlers clash with soldiers

BATSHEVA TSUR

RESIDENTS of Jordan Valley settlements, many of them Labor Party supporters, clashed yesterday with soldiers in a protest against the Na'ama near Jericho.

Four people were injured and four others arrested when they blocked the road with heavy rocks and burning tires to protest autonomy arrangements in the Jericho area.

"This is impossible. Are we living in a police state or a state of law and order?" shouted one resident as he held his crying daughter. His wife and son had been detained a few minutes earlier for placing roadblocks. "We will not give in," he continued. "We will remain here despite everything that [Prime Minister Yitzhak] Rabin does."

"[The army's] behavior is brutal," said Hanan, of Netiv Hagdud. "I cannot understand how a soldier can use the butt of his gun to smash open the head of a boy. We have four injured here."

"I support the peace process and am in favor of rights for the Palestinians. But since the Oslo accords, no one has bothered to tell us what is going to happen," Yoni Tsodi, of Kibbutz Kalia, told Israel Radio later. "The northern coast of the Dead Sea must remain in Israeli hands forever."

He said he foresees a situation where Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians cooperate to turn the region into a tourist paradise.

No road has been built bypassing Jericho because of pressure from the residents of that town, said Eran Peram, of Moshav Tomer. "The residents of Jericho want to force tourists to drive through it. They had better make sure it will be safe."

Qatar arms control parley begins

DOHA, Qatar (AP) - Qatar's foreign minister yesterday inaugurated a conference on Middle East arms control with a call on Israel, a key participant, to drop its nuclear weapons program and sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

According to the official Qatar news agency, Sheikh Hamad bin Jasssem bin Jaber Al Thani also urged Israel to open its nuclear facilities for inspection to help reduce tension and push forward the drive for a peace settlement between Arabs and Jews.

An Israeli team, led by Defense Ministry Director-General Dayan Ivri, was among 40 delegations attending the meeting.

The parley is one of five "multilateral" groups that branched off the Middle East peace process when it was launched in October 1991. The others are on water, refugees, environment and economic development.

Protocol gaffe leaves Arab-American group out of delegation to Cairo ceremony

HILLEL KUTTLER
WASHINGTON

WITNESSES to today's Cairo signing of the agreement between Israel and the Palestinians will include business and community leaders of the American Jewish and Arab communities. But a protocol faux pas has ruffled the feathers of Arab-American officials here.

The White House last week called Builders for Peace - a group of Arab and Jewish businessmen organized last autumn seeking to invest in the territories - to invite its members to attend. But in doing so, it ignored the more established Arab-American groups here, critics said.

"There seems to be a lack of control in the White House in dealing with our community," National Association of Arab-Americans (NAAA) director Khalil Jabshan said yesterday, complaining that he was "kind of offended by the process."

NAAA is the largest, most politically active Arab-American organization. "To have a half-baked process, and ignoring the normal protocol or procedure - I'm just puzzled," he said.

Although Builders for Peace president James Zogby later extended an invitation to NAAA, "we felt the way things were handled was not conducive to our participating," said Jabshan.

The US delegation will be headed by former congressman Mike Levine, who serves as co-president of Builders for Peace with Zogby, the Arab-American Institute president.

Knesset panel okays bill allowing comptroller to oversee Histadrut

EVELYN GORDON

THE Knesset law committee yesterday approved for first reading two bills which would make the Histadrut subject to oversight by the state comptroller, despite the objections of the State Comptroller's Office.

David Mena and Limor Livnat (Likud), the sponsors of the bills, said that supervision of the Histadrut by the state comptroller is necessary both because of persistent reports of financial irregularities and because so many Histadrut organizations receive public funding.

However, State Comptroller's

go far enough. The committee therefore approved a formulation giving the comptroller the right to investigate any Histadrut body. The law will also be expanded to cover other workers' organizations.

However, the MKs all accepted Katz's suggestion that it is unwise to tamper with a Basic Law if not absolutely necessary. Therefore the amendment will be to the ordinary law defining the comptroller's responsibilities, instead of to the Basic Law: The State Comptroller, as Livnat and Mena originally proposed.

'Davar' workers react to Ramon's closure threats

MICHAEL YUDELMAN

THE works committee of the Histadrut-owned daily newspaper *Davar* held an emergency meeting yesterday, following reported threats by MK Haim Ramon, head of the Ramon-Meretz list, to close the paper if he is elected Histadrut secretary-general.

Ramon has allegedly stated on at least three occasions that *Davar* is hostile to him and that he is considering closing it. He was also quoted as saying in closed gatherings that he has no need of *Davar*, since he has Mapam's *Al Hanishmar*.

Last Friday's *Davar* featured a full-page interview with Ramon, more than double the space allotted any other contender.

The works committee issued a statement blasting "Ramon's declarations concerning the future of the newspaper, which provides a living for 150 families."

Ramon's spokeswoman yesterday denied the allegations that

Ramon had threatened to close *Davar*. Ramon, she said, had mentioned that it has a very small circulation and said that he would increase its circulation.

Meretz spokesman Danny Miodovnik said it is premature to speak of closing *Davar*, since the list has not yet won the election and Ramon is not yet secretary-general. Should this happen, he said, all the Histadrut's holdings, including *Davar*, would be carefully scrutinized before any decisions are made.

SOCIAL & PERSONAL

The weekly meeting of the English-speaking Jerusalem Rotary Club will take place today, 1 p.m., at the YMCA, King David St. Michael Stern will speak on investment.

In grief and sorrow we announce the passing in Jerusalem on Lag ba'Omer of our father, Abba, father-in-law, grandfather and great-grandfather

MAX V. FALK

12-1-1905 - 29-04-1994

The funeral took place in Jerusalem within the family circle on May 1 (20 Iyar).

Deeply mourned by:

Ruth Vleeschhouwer-Falk and Joseef Evelynne Al-Falk and Joop Rob J. Falk and Yvonne Lies Vreeswijk all his grandchildren and great-grandson

Correspondence to: Ruth Vleeschhouwer-Falk, 105 Uziel St., Jerusalem 96431. Fam. E. Al-Falk, Schubertstr. 72 - 1077 GX-Amsterdam, Holland. Prayers and shiva at: 105-1 Uziel St., Bayit Vegan, Jerusalem, Tel. 02-415144.

In deep sorrow, I announce the passing of

MAX FALK ז"ל

beloved husband of Gretl Falk ז"ל

The funeral has already taken place.

Deeply mourned by Lies

The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

mourns the passing of

MARCUS (Mark) MIZNE

and extends deepest condolences to the family.



TO ANNETTE CELINE MIZNE

We are with you in your deep grief over the passing away of your father

MARCUS MARK MIZNE OF BLESSED MEMORY

A great donor of Tel-Aviv-Yafo and the state of Israel, a noble and loyal friend

RONI MILO
Mayor of Tel-Aviv-Yafo
Chairman of the Tel-Aviv Foundation

The Board, Management & Staff of the Tel Aviv Foundation

NORMAN WEINBERG

was tragically killed in Johannesburg on Monday, May 2, 1994.

Sadly missed by:
Myra and Smoky Simon
Naomi, Tessa, Lindi, Robert Mark and Anouska Weinberg

Foreign for \$4.00 'triu

FOREIGN... Bezak help... Peter Gabrie

Namir helps gain release of detained social workers

SASHA SADAN

SEVENTEEN social workers detained by police at the mass protest held in Haifa yesterday were released a few hours later, after Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Ora Namir intervened with Police Inspector-General Assaf Hefetz on their behalf.

An estimated 1,000 social workers from all over the North participated in the protest, with other social workers keeping a vigil across from the Tel Aviv offices of the Finance Ministry. Several dozen union members went to the Employment Service in Jerusalem to look for work.

The strike entered its 14th day today. Yesterday union leaders met informally with Histadrut representatives and the Treasury's assistant director of wages, Yuval Rakelbesky, but union head Eli Ben-Gera said he rejected the government offer to have intensive negotiations if the strike is halted for 48 hours. "There were no results from the meeting," Ben-Gera said.

MK Rafael Eitan (Tsomet), chairman of the Knesset war on drugs committee, asked Finance Minister Avraham Shohat "to take action to end the strike of the social workers. It [the strike] is especially difficult for those involved in the process of recovering from alcohol addiction and in need of intensive support." Eitan also mentioned drug addicts left without a support network.

Twenty-nine drug addicts in Haifa sent a letter to the union's strike headquarters, union spokesman David Ziso said, in which they said addicts in rehabilitation programs were returning to drugs.

"We come in the morning and drink our methadone, without any other kind of help. It's really a pity that we are without those who listen to us and warn us against street drugs...we are first of all human beings and we should have total care to be able to help ourselves," they wrote.

Ziso said the strike headquarters received dozens of appeals for help yesterday, but social workers were not allowed to intervene on behalf of their clients.

The single-parent mother of an immigrant family from Ethiopia was hospitalized in a psychiatric facility "several days ago" and three of her children left without any adult supervision, he said. Although their social worker brought them basic foods, she was not permitted to deal with the family further.

Ben-Porat to probe Treasury's NIS 180m. loan to Kupat Holim

EVELYN GORDON

STATE Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat will prepare an opinion on the propriety of the Treasury's NIS 180 million loan to the Histadrut's Kupat Holim Clalit, she told the Knesset state control committee yesterday.

The loan arrangement, signed in February, allows Kupat Holim to withhold payment, for each of the first six months of the year, of up to NIS 30m. a month of the money it owes the government for hospitalization bills.

The opinion had been requested by Sylvan Shalom (Likud), but the request was supported by all of the MKs present, including those from the Labor Party.

Shalom charged that the arrangement violated the Kupat Holim recovery agreement, which states that the Treasury will deduct Kupat Holim debts from the parallel tax payments it owes the health fund. In addition, he said, all government funding for non-governmental bodies requires the approval of the Knesset finance committee, which Finance Minister Avraham Shohat failed to obtain.

"This violates the basic rules of proper administration," he said. "Wonder of wonders. I agree with Sylvan Shalom," said Yoram Lass (Labor). "The time has come to stop special allocations to Kupat Holim."

However, he added, the government should replace this funding with an overall increase in its spending on public health care, so that Kupat Holim's clientele isn't hurt.

Accountant-General Reuven Kokolevich disputed Shalom's charges, noting that the budget law allows the finance minister to authorize outlays that will be covered by future income without the finance committee's consent. The loan to Kupat Holim meets this criterion, he said, since it can be deducted from future parallel tax payments.

Clalit head Prof. Dan Michaeli added that the loan was necessary because of a 23 percent rise in government hospital fees, which increased the fund's debt to the government by NIS 60m. a month, and an expensive wage agreement in the health sector - both of which developments

took place during the first two months of the year, when it was too late to budget for them.

Anna Schneider, legal adviser to both the finance and state control committees, agreed with Kokolevich that the loan did not violate the budget law, but agreed with Shalom that it was "a deviation from the [finance committee-approved] recovery agreement," and therefore required at least notification to, and possibly approval by, that committee.

Ben-Porat concluded by saying that her office is already investigating the entire recovery agreement, and will investigate the loan issue as well.

When the Treasury wanted to change something in the recovery agreement at the end of 1992, she noted, it did ask the finance committee's approval. "What has changed?" she asked rhetorically.

Furthermore, she added, the loan could be considered outright support, not, as Kokolevich said, an outlay covered by future income.

However, she stressed, she has not yet formulated any definite opinion on the issue.



Irving Schneider.

(Silk)

Irving Schneider, force behind Children's Medical Center, honored by Weizman

SASHA SADAN

PRESIDENT Ezer Weizman yesterday presented the President's Medal, the highest honor given annually by the National Council of the Child, to New York real estate magnate Irving Schneider, the moving force behind the Children's Medical Center of Israel, which opened last summer on the grounds of Beilinson Hospital in Petah Tikva.

"Schneider said the children's medical center was 'a creation that was done very carefully. My wife and I have traveled around the world looking at children's hospitals, and we had the best experts.'"

"Dr. Yitzhak Kadman, executive-director of the National Council of the Child, noted that its committee of judges did 'something unusual and picked someone who isn't a citizen of Israel,

though there are so many good people and wonderful organizations working on behalf of children here."

But Kadman noted that Schneider's role in creation of the center was one of initiative, then of a pusher, and finally of checking up on every detail. "He came quite often, every month, to check his baby. In fact, he was getting faxes and checking up on the electrical contractor," Kadman said with a smile. He noted that since the construction of the \$60 million dollar medical center, Schneider had contributed to many other projects in Israel, in both the Jewish and Arab communities.

Schneider, in accepting the award, asked the audience to do him a favor in return and to visit the Children's Medical Center of Israel.

Foreign journalists asked for \$4,000 to cover Arafat's 'triumphant' entry

LIAT COLLINS

FOREIGN journalists wishing to cover Yasser Arafat's entrance into Jericho and Gaza will reportedly be asked to pay the PLO \$4,000 for the privilege.

Foreign Press Association head Connie Mus told Israel Radio that his attempts to verify the press reports revealed that an Austrian news company had bought the exclusive rights to the story in a deal signed with senior PLO official Yasser Abed Rabbo.

Mus said other foreign journalists apparently would be asked to pay, but the amount and what they would receive in return for it were not known. The FPA has objected to the plan which is unprecedented for such major events, Mus said.

The money is apparently intended to go to a Palestinian academy in Gaza. Israel Television and Israel Radio will broadcast live coverage of the Cairo Agreement signing ceremony at 11 a.m. along with live broadcasts from Jericho and Gaza.

Some 24 IBA staffers have been sent to Cairo to cover the event, and hundreds of IBA journalists and employees are involved in the project. Certain changes are expected in the broadcast schedules as a result of the ceremony and Educational Television has given up some of its studio time so ITV's Channel One can carry the broadcasts.

Radio Two and Kol Yisrael's Arabic language service will broadcast the entire ceremony without translation. Radio One will carry a simultaneous translation into Hebrew.

The ceremony will be screened again on the Mabat newsreel along with live broadcasts from Gaza, Jericho and other places around the country.

Bezek helping world cover signing

JUDY SIEGEL

BEZEK has organized one of its largest ever telecommunications projects to make possible wide coverage of the autonomy agreement and its implementation. A mobile satellite transmission station flown to Cairo Monday night will transmit the signing ceremony to Israel's TV channels and the rest of the world.

That and other equipment will allow a videoconference between Cairo and Jerusalem. Special lines have been installed for the Army Radio's broadcasts from the event.

A large number of broadcasting

companies in the US, Europe, and the Far East have requested technical help in transmitting the ceremony, and fiber-optic cables have been laid to accommodate them.

In addition, hundreds of kilometers of fiber-optic lines have been laid, providing data, voice, and video connections between Israel and the autonomous regions. A video studio in Gaza was also installed. The new telecommunications infrastructure will serve the customs and border control stations, as well as Interior Ministry and financial services.

Peter Gabriel to appear here in June

DAVID BRINN

ROCK superstar Peter Gabriel will be making his first appearance here next month as he brings his pet project WOMAD (World of Music, Art and Music) to the Middle East.

The eclectic singer/songwriter will perform in Tel Aviv's Hayarkon Park on June 19, a day after he gives a concert in Taba, Egypt. Gabriel conceived of WOMAD in 1982 as a means to expose World Beat music to a wider audience. The festival-style show also features ethnic art and dance.

According to a release issued by Gabriel's publicists, WOMAD will also feature local Egyptian (in Taba) and Israeli talent. And for the first time, tickets will be available in Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

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SUPER-SOL

HYPERCOL

American teen under stress while awaiting flogging decision

SINGAPORE (AP) — The mother of an American teenager sentenced to be lashed said yesterday her son was under stress and needed sedatives to sleep while awaiting a decision on his mercy plea.

Speaking briefly to reporters, Randy Chan said her son, Michael Fay, was being well-treated in prison, where he is serving a four-month term for spray-painting cars and other acts of vandalism.

"Basically he's just waiting and that's very stressful," she said. "It's very, very difficult [for him] to sleep right now, waiting for us to find out about the clemency."

Fay, an 18-year-old high school student, submitted the clemency plea to President Ong Teng Cheong April 20. There has been no word from the government, but several senior officials have said Fay could not be exempted from the lash.

Elder statesman Lee Kuan Yew, who pushed through a law to cane vandals in 1966, has said the government would lose its moral authority and right to govern if it made an exception for Fay because he was an American. His remarks were carried in the most recent issue of *Time* magazine.

"Michael's in good spirits... He had messages which are rather personal so I won't pass them along right now," Chan said. "I've told him he's got a lot of support out here. He just told me about to hang in there. He's anxious to hear about the clemency. He doesn't understand why we haven't heard yet."

Chan spoke after emerging from Queenstown Prison, where she and her businessman husband Marco Chan met with Michael for about half an hour. They were accompanied by a male teenager who was

thought to be a friend of Michael's. Mrs. Chan and Michael's father, George Fay, were divorced when Michael was 9 years old. His father now lives in Kettering, Ohio. The Chans have lived in Singapore since 1992, and Michael attended the Singapore American School until he was arrested last October along with several other young expatriates.

Chan said she learned that Michael was receiving doses of Valium and hoped he would continue to get some medicine that would allow him to sleep.

Prior to his imprisonment, Michael was receiving medication for attention deficit disorder, a condition that causes compulsive and disruptive behavior. Chan says the disorder made it hard for Michael to concentrate on his studies.

Last Saturday, the Prisons Department said it was giving Michael a conservative daily dose of 25 milligrams of Valium to wean him off several powerful drugs that had been prescribed by his personal psychiatrist.

The parents are allowed to visit Michael every two weeks. US Embassy officials, who last saw him Saturday, are likewise permitted visits about every 14 days.

The case has drawn international attention and debate about whether Michael's punishment fits his crime and whether America's liberal legal system was responsible for that country's high crime rate.

Some Americans, fed up with violence in their society, have said Michael should be lashed and similar punishment should be introduced in the United States. Others have described Singapore's law as "barbaric."

British Holocaust denier again barred from entering Australia

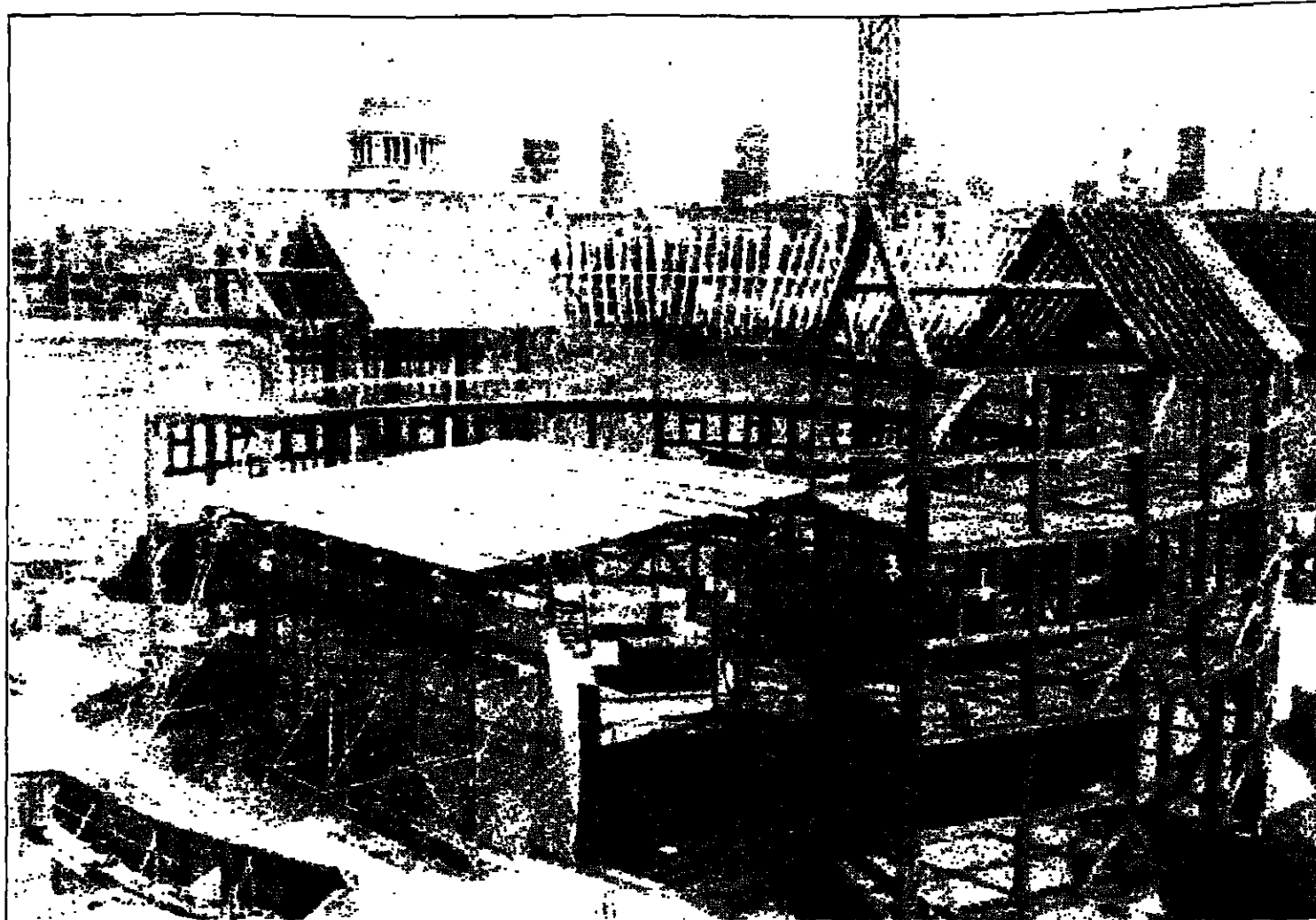
CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Australia yesterday refused British historian David Irving permission to visit.

Irving has argued in his books that accounts of the Holocaust have been greatly exaggerated.

The decision to prevent Irving's entry was announced in Parliament by Immigration Minister Nick Bolks.

"I have decided to reject Mr. Irving's application on the basis that he does not meet the public interest criteria of good character in the migration regulations," Bolks said.

Bolks said Irving was deported from Canada in 1992, and excluded from Germany the following year.



The dome of St. Paul's is seen over the first section of thatched roof to be laid on The Globe Theatre. The open air wooden theatre is being built over the foundations of the original Tudor building where Shakespeare performed, and is expected to open in June 1995.

Channel Tunnel to be dedicated, but passengers will have to wait

CARL SCHOETTLE
FOLKESTONE

THE sprawling complexity of ramps, rails, roadways, bridges and platforms at the British end of the Channel Tunnel awaits traffic in a faintly ghostlike suspense under a thin fog rolling in from the sea.

Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain and President Francois Mitterrand of France will be here Friday to celebrate the opening of the "Chunnel" and the connection of Britain and Europe for the "first time since the Ice Age."

The moment will mark the climax of 10 days of inauguration festivities here and in Calais, France. They're celebrating the completion if not the real opening of the longest "submarine" tunnel in the world — 38 kilometers, about 23.5 miles, under the seabed of the English Channel — and probably the most complicated.

The tunnel, actually two single-track rail tubes and a service tunnel, runs 50 kilometers, or 31 miles, from portal to portal.

Eurotunnel says the drive-on, drive-off Le Shuttle train service will take 35 minutes, about 26 minutes in the tunnel.

The Queen and the French president will travel through on a special train to take the symbolic inauguration ceremonies to Calais.

But lesser mortals will have to wait a while before they can take the same trip. Tunnel authorities remain coy about just when that will be. They have pushed the date back several times, to the dismay of their banker backers and investment firms who see a summer's business lost.

The Channel Tunnel is essentially a rail system carrying cars and buses and what the British call heavy goods vehicles on separate passenger and freight shuttles. The French and British national railways will use the tunnel to run through-trains for passengers (Eurostar) and freight between the United Kingdom and Europe.

The Eurotunnel's Le Shuttle service for trucks may begin soon. But full fare-paying passenger service through the tunnel will

probably not be operating until next March.

Widely hailed as one of the greatest and most prestigious engineering feats of the 20th century, the \$15 billion Channel Tunnel project already fulfills old dreams and raises old fears.

Since 1751, 26 attempts have been made to design a tunnel that would connect Europe to Britain, as the London tabloid that reported "Heavy Fog Over Channel, Continent Cut Off" no doubt would view the accomplishment.

Fears of invasion from the continent ended most of them, including Colonel F.E. Beaumont's 1882 attempt to bore a tunnel at about the same place and depth as the Eurotunnel. The colonel advanced his tunnel a mile and a quarter toward Calais before it was deemed a military risk.

Digging began at Shakespeare Cliff Dec. 1, 1987, in France a month later, and was finished by

the end of June 1991.

High-speed Eurostar passenger service may begin with one train a day running between London and Paris through the tunnel in July.

Similar service will be extended to Brussels, Belgium, a little later. But don't expect the full schedule of 15 daily trains each way until next year.

High speed occurs mostly in France where trains reach 186 miles an hour. Britain is slowly upgrading the rail lines between the tunnel and London's Waterloo Station, where a newly-built airport-type terminal has been waiting almost a year for Eurostar trains. But trains can manage 100 mph on parts of the Folkestone-Waterloo link.

British travel experts think the three-hour, 310-mile, Eurostar downtown-to-downtown Paris-London run can be extremely competitive with air travel. Flight time takes about an hour, but getting to and from airports and checking in can take another two or two-and-a-half hours.

The Baltimore Sun

Police charge wife of alleged serial killer

GLOUCESTER, England (AP) — Police yesterday charged Rosemary West with killing a Swiss woman, bringing to four the number of murder charges against her.

Her husband, Frederick West, a 52-year-old builder, had previously been charged with murdering the same four women and six others.

Mrs. West, 40, was charged with the murder of Therese Siegenthaler, a Swiss student who was 21 when she disappeared in April 1974. Miss Siegenthaler, who came from Bern, was studying sociology in southeast London.

The bodies of nine women, including the Wests' 16-year-old daughter, Heather, were found buried at the family's house and garden in Gloucester, 120 kilometers west of London.

A 10th body, that of Frederick West's first wife, Catherine, was found buried in a field in Kempeley, 16 kilometers north of Gloucester. Their daughter is missing and police continue to search a field near Kempeley and another house in Gloucester where West once lived.

Besides the four murder charges, Mrs. West is charged with raping an 11-year-old girl between July 1974 and July 1976, assaulting a seven-year-old boy between 1972 and 1974, and raping a girl between 1976 and 1980.

Rosemary married Frederick West in 1972, more than a year after the birth of Heather. The couple had five other children.

Robbery suspect returns to Britain

LONDON (Reuters) — A fugitive businessman wanted in connection with Britain's biggest cash robbery returned voluntarily from an 11-year exile in Spain on Monday to face prosecution over the armed raid.

Ronnie Knight, 60, flew into Luton airport in southern England aboard a private jet from Spain and, flanked by a television crew and reporters from a newspaper, gave himself up to police.

Within hours of his arrival, police said they had charged the restaurateur and nightclub owner with involvement in the seven million pound (\$10.60 million) armed robbery at an east London security company in April 1983. He was also charged with handling stolen money from the raid.

In a pre-recorded interview for Sky satellite television news, Knight said he wanted to clear his name and regain his freedom to travel along with his wife, who has remained at their luxury Spanish villa.

"I want to come back and take my wife where I want to go," he said. "I can't go anywhere... I couldn't leave Spain. But now that's what I want to do."

Knight ran a chain of nightclubs in London during the "swinging" 1960s where he rubbed shoulders with celebrities and gangland leaders.

He left Britain shortly after the security robbery to settle on Spain's Costa del Sol, dubbed "Costa del Crime" for the number of British fugitives from justice who made a new life there before the two countries agreed an extradition treaty.

Police made several unsuccessful attempts to extradite him.

In the armed raid, which netted the biggest cash sum in British crime history, a gang of masked gunmen forced a guard to hand over keys to a vault by pouring petrol over him and threatening to set him alight.

Oddness rising, says British journal of the weird

CAROLINE BROTHERS
LONDON

THE world is definitely getting weirder.

Miracles, strange deaths, apparitions, extreme weather conditions and the revival of ancient rites increased during the past 12 months, according to a journal of strange phenomena.

Bizarre deaths, spontaneous combustion, hoaxes and apparitions are also on the rise and show no signs of abating.

Britain's *Fortean Times* is turning 21 this year and has just published the first findings of its 1993 Strangeness Index, recording disturbing occurrences reported around the world over the past

year. Some phenomena are growing ever more prevalent but others such as crop circles, spontaneously combusting people, and close encounters with paranormal entities, are easing off. Mass deaths, paranormal experiences and psychical phenomena are about steady, the *Fortean Times* index shows.

But taken collectively, rises and falls tabulated across 34 categories of weirdness show oddness is clearly on the rise.

"The total baseline value for 1992 is 3,400, and our assessed value for 1993 is 3,520, making an increase in strangeness of some 3.5

percent," say the editors of the *Fortean Times*.

"In terms of first class mysteries or enigmas we have about 10 a month — probably about 200 a year," editor Paul Sieveking told Reuters. He added that the magazine's offices receive about 15 letters a day from the frontlines of the paranormal.

Many letters come in from the Philippines, which he said ranks as one of the strangest countries on the planet. "It's always good for a story — mass panics, ghosts, possessions, weird natural disasters, reli-

gious manias...

"What we like is to get first-hand reports of things, but we have developed a nose for bogus stories," Sieveking said. Accounts that pan out too neatly immediately raise the editors' suspicions. "True stories are often inconclusive," he added.

Sieveking and fellow editor Bob Rickard trawl through magazines ranging from the British science journal *Nature* to the *Funeral Directors' Monthly*, seeking accounts of weird atmospheric phenomena and incorruptible bodies that refuse to decompose.

The latest issue of the *Fortean Times*, which is published every two months, recounts the best of the year's abnormal happenings. One involved the leader of a Hindu sect whose flyblown body was kept on ice by followers for 56 days in the belief he would rise from the dead. Some 1,200 police battled 4,000 devotees to enforce the guru's cremation.

In another incident, 1,300 Egyptian schoolgirls were struck by nausea and fainting fits which closed 32 schools in an incidence of mass hysteria.

Publisher Mike Dash says that every year they receive about a dozen reports of spontaneous human combustion — in which a person suddenly catches fire and is vaporized, leaving their arms and legs intact but their body a heap of ashes.

"Psychic matter, ghosts, apparitions — there always have been strange phenomena and far from most are reported," Sieveking said, adding the *Fortean Times* aimed to encourage people to trust their own experiences.

The 20,000 subscribers to the *Fortean Times*, named after iconic US philosopher Charles Fort, include lawyers, spiritualists, United Nations employees and computer scientists.

Readers come from as far afield as the United States, France, Australia, Saudi Arabia, China, Iceland and the Ivory Coast.

"They tend to be information junkies who spend a lot on books and magazines," Sieveking said.

Asked what prompted ordinary people from the furthest reaches of the world to write in with tales of mass panics, ghosts and possessions, Sieveking said readers felt the magazine was at the forefront of scientific endeavor.

"We published stuff in 1979 about crop circles before anyone else noticed them. It took another 10 years to get into the mainstream press," Sieveking said.

Crop circles — round areas of flattened crops — hit the headlines in Britain in the early 1990s. Some people believe they could be traces left by unidentified flying objects or signs from spirits trying to communicate with man. Others blame pranksters or the weather.

The latest issue of the *Fortean Times* explores the mystery of porcupines found crushed to death among the crops.

"Ball lightning — free floating spherical lightning that floats in and out of houses, blows up the electricity, and generally behaves in a very bizarre way — at first people thought it was all invented, but now it's seen as a genuine phenomenon," he said.

The *Fortean Times* was among the first to report it and has one of the best archives on the subject.

"The frontiers of knowledge get advanced by scientific enquiry," he said. "It's what drives exploration — it's the cutting edge." (Reuters)

4 ONE-DAY TRIPS with Shorashim & The Jerusalem Post Travel Club

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Thursday May 19 **IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BRITISH IN JERUSALEM**
With Dr. Uriel Advi, architect and expert on the British Mandate period you visit the Allenby Memorial, Romema, The Rockefeller Museum, The Jaffa Gate, St. Andrews Church, Talbich, the Anglo-Palestine Bank and more. Price NIS 115

Thursday May 26 **"AND AT NIGHT THEY SPEAK WITH GOD"**
A tour and meetings in the mystical Jerusalem night, until the crack of dawn. Join the Breslavs in their talk with God, meet Rabbi Zusman at the Wall, visit Yeshivat Kol Torah, and the Prophet Samuel's tomb, meet Haredi talmudic scholars and meditators. Darkness brings strange phenomena. Tour guide — Mr. Benny Brown. Price NIS 110

Wednesday June 1 **"CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM"**
The capital has 137 churches and monasteries, for the many different Christian sects and factions, all very fascinating from a theological viewpoint. We'll visit Ein Karem's Church of the Visitation and the Church of St. John, the Church of John the Baptist, the Monastery of the Cross, the Dormition Abbey and the Augusta Victoria Church. Tour guide — Moli Brog. Price NIS 110

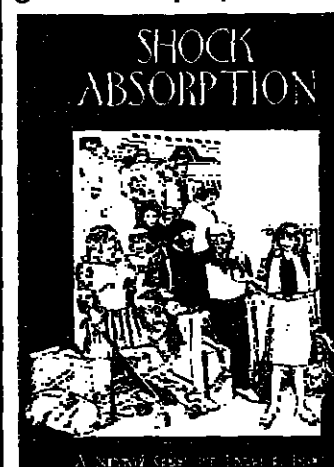
Tuesday June 7 **"UNDERGROUND JERUSALEM"**
Join archaeologist Aren Maeir on a tour of the hidden city, a place where one does not see the sun, the dark mysterious Jerusalem, hidden underground. Included are visits to a Herodian mansion, the Rabbinic Tunnel (Minaret HaKotel), the Warren Shaft and the Southern Wall excavations. Price NIS 110

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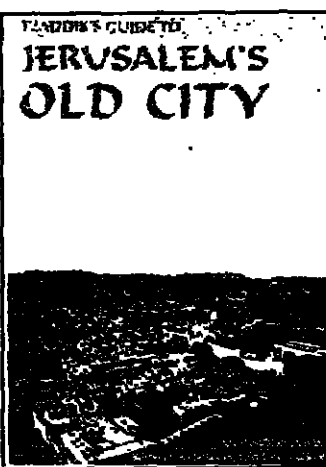
Reservations and further information:
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Tel 02-686231 (9 a.m. — 3 p.m.)
ask for Tami, Varda, Lola.

USER-FRIENDLY ISRAEL GUIDES

For the Anglo-newcomer, the "veteran oleh" or visitor. Two new guides that help explain some of the in's and out's of Israel...



SHOCK ABSORPTION
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After the parties, Mandela gets down to business

TOM COHEN
JOHANNESBURG

NELSON Mandela prepared yesterday to start shaping the post-apartheid government he will lead, but the gathering of the new, multi-racial National Assembly was delayed until next week because of slow vote-counting.

After joyous street celebrations subsided with the dawn, Mandela met with outgoing President F.W. de Klerk to discuss the composition of the new cabinet that will be dominated by their parties. The meeting was private and no statement was issued.

De Klerk conceded Monday that Mandela's ANC would win a majority in the nation's first all-race election last week. Mandela then set off a euphoric victory party at the ANC's election headquarters with a speech that mixed praise for his party and political rivals, including de Klerk, with a call to face challenges of severe social needs in South Africa.

The dancing, chanting crowds that jammed streets in major cities and black townships were gone as morning commuters made their way to work. Initial reports indicated little violence or vandalism that had been feared when blacks finally could celebrate the end of apartheid after voting for the first time and choosing one of their parties to lead the country.

After nearly four days of vote-counting, only 53 percent of the estimated 22.7 million ballots had been counted. The Transitional Executive Council, which has been overseeing the government of the country, announced that seating of the 400-member National Assembly would be delayed from Friday until Monday. Provincial legislatures will now meet Saturday, instead of Thursday.

The main job of the first session of the assembly is to elect Mandela as South Africa's first black president, so that he can be inaugurated on May 10. There will be no change in the inauguration date, said the Transitional Executive Council.

"Free at last!" Mandela said Monday night as he realized his lifelong dream of creating a non-racial democracy in South Africa.

Thousands of blacks thronged to the streets, dancing, singing, whistling and waving the black, green and gold flag of the ANC. "We are happy!" yelled a beaming, gap-toothed woman in the streets of Soweto, the huge black township just outside Johannesburg. The crowd chanted, "Mandela, Mandela, and ANC, ANC."

Mandela himself joined in the jubilation - dancing across a hotel stage with Coretta Scott King, widow of US civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

"This is indeed a joyous night for the human spirit. This is your victory too," Mandela, 75, told hundreds of supporters and a nationwide television audience.

In his concession statement, delivered at the Pretoria headquarters of his National Party, de Klerk praised Mandela, a political prisoner of 27 years, as "a man of destiny" and pledged to work with him in the new government of national unity.

Mandela in turn congratulated de Klerk "for the many days, weeks and months and the four years that we have worked together, quar-

reled, addressed sensitive problems, and at the end of our heated exchanges were able to shake hands and to drink coffee."

The two leaders navigated the country through an extraordinary transition in which an oppressive white minority surrendered its privileges to the black majority, and both sides promised to forgive the past and build one nation.

In a symbol of that remarkable spirit, ANC officials stood before their new national flag and raised their glasses in a toast in honor of the outgoing president, the incoming president and the "new South Africa."

"I stand before you filled with deep pride and joy - pride in the ordinary, humble people of this country," said Mandela, savoring the moment. "You have shown such a calm, patient determination to reclaim this country as your own. And joy that we can loudly proclaim from the rooftops - free at last!"

Although ballot officials had only reached halfway through the counting, an ANC landslide in the new national parliament was indisputable.

With 12 million votes counted - 53 percent of the estimated total - the ANC had 62.5 percent to 22.1 percent for de Klerk's National Party. The Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party was a distant third with 8.3 percent, followed by the pro-apartheid Freedom Front with 2.7 percent.

The ANC was projected to win around 240 seats in the new 400-seat National Assembly, the lower house of a Parliament that will eventually have a Senate made up of representatives of the nine provincial legislatures. The ANC also appeared likely to win seven of the nine provincial races.

In the Western Cape, which includes Cape Town, the National Party held 54.9 percent of the provincial vote yesterday and claimed victory.

Inkatha, meanwhile, had won 53.4 percent of the provincial votes in KwaZulu-Natal, which includes the traditional Zulu homeland, and a party official said it expected to finish with 60 percent.

Mandela's speech, and that of de Klerk, culminated a process that began with Mandela's release from prison in February 1990 and long negotiations leading to the election last week when the country's black majority voted for the first time.

The ANC leader stressed reconciliation and cooperation, inviting political rivals to join him in forming a unity government. But Mandela also insisted on all serving in the new government must support the ANC's ambitious - some say unrealistic - development plan to provide housing, jobs and improved living standards to millions of impoverished blacks.

De Klerk is expected to serve as one of two vice presidents, and in his concession speech he made clear he expected to maintain a powerful presence in government. "During the past four years, we have proved that we can work together," de Klerk said. "Our relationship has become a symbol of the ability of South Africans from widely different backgrounds to cooperate in the national interest." (AP)

Thousands of Rwandans in hiding

PAULINE JELINEK
NAIROBI

RELIEF workers kept trying to reach thousands of hungry, terrified people hiding throughout Rwanda yesterday, as international efforts were under way to try to bring an end to the bloodbath.

But the rebels said yesterday that they oppose any intervention in the Central African country.

"If the mission of such a force is to stop the genocide, it is too late," said Jacques Bihozagara of the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front.

More than 100,000 Rwandans have been killed in nearly a month of ethnic savagery. An estimated 1.3 million have been displaced and about 250,000 refugees have fled to Tanzania.

Bihozagara said an international force would serve to prevent the rebels from advancing against government forces, whom he blamed for the massacres.

"It would protect the killers," he told reporters in Brussels, Belgium.

The rebels will reject appeals for a cease-fire until army units and militias they hold responsible for the massacres are "disarmed and disarmed," said Bihozagara.

The government and army are led by Hutus, the majority ethnic group in Rwanda, while the rebels are mostly Tutsis.

Small arms fire was heard yesterday in Kigali, the Rwandan capital where civilian gangs and militias still control much of downtown, said UN spokesman Abdul Kabia by telephone from Kigali.

He said there are reports the killings have diminished in the



A young Tanzanian child plays with a machete he took from a pile of spears, machetes and clubs confiscated by border guards in Rusumo from Rwandan refugees. (AP)

city, but massacres and banditry continue in the countryside, particularly southern areas controlled by the army and militias.

Aid teams sent to assess the number of needy have uncovered hundreds of thousands of people

throughout Rwanda.

An estimated 250,000 of Kigali's 350,000 residents have fled the city, said Emery Brusset, spokesman for the UN's emergency humanitarian effort in Rwanda. UN officials estimate that some

20,000 people are sheltered in unguarded churches throughout the capital, as well as in the known UN safe havens: a stadium, hospital and two hotels.

Some are afraid to tell even the United Nations where they are

hiding.

"Parishes around the city are playing the role of refuge for a lot of people, but people will not tell us where they are hiding because they feel threatened," Brusset said in Nairobi. (AP)

Cambodia fighting sends more than 50,000 fleeing

BANGKOK (AP) - Some 55,000 people have fled their homes in western Cambodia as Khmer Rouge guerrillas intensified attacks on government-held areas in recent days, international aid officials said yesterday.

It is by far the largest refugee flight since the United Nations organized elections in May 1993 to help end civil war in Cambodia. Communist Khmer Rouge guerrillas boycotted the election and have continued fighting.

Guerrillas have stepped up attacks in the adjoining western provinces of Battambang and Banteay Meanchey since recapturing their headquarters at Pailin in Battambang on April 19. By evening, however, no major fighting was reported Tuesday.

Thousands of people have taken refuge in homes of relatives, along roads, in temples and in the provincial capitals, said international aid officials. Some villagers sleep in the fields at night and return to their villages in the daytime. Groups of a few hundred people each have crossed into Thailand.

"Many communes have totally evacuated," said Scott Leiper, head of the UN World Food Program in Phnom Penh, where he was reached by telephone from Bangkok. "Many fled as a precaution because they felt

it would get a lot worse than it is now."

Virtually the entire population of Battambang's Ratanak Mondul district - 27,000 people - fled before the guerrillas seized it late last week, Leiper said.

Those people included at least 5,000 who had gone there seeking economic opportunities after returning from Thai refugee camps even though UN officials warned them land mines made the area unsafe. They also included thousands of other people who had been living in temporary settlements after having fled fighting a couple of years earlier. Those settlements were burned down during the Khmer Rouge advance, aid officials said.

Leiper said many people who had been living in permanent settlements were able to take plenty of food with them and were not in dire need.

But conditions are miserable for many of those in Ratanak Mondul and elsewhere who had only temporary settlements, he said. The World Food Program is focusing aid on some 10,000 who need shelter, food and water.

Leiper said a total of about 45,000 people may have been displaced in Battambang and another 10,000 to 15,000 in Banteay Meanchey.

Five hanged for trying to kill Egyptian PM

CAIRO (AP) - Five men were hanged yesterday for trying to kill Egypt's prime minister.

As is customary in Egypt, the five went to the gallows in Cairo Appeals Prison with only a representative of the military court that convicted them and police as witnesses. Relatives, journalists and other outsiders are not allowed.

The five Muslim extremists, plus four who still have not been captured, were convicted March 17 of trying to assassinate Prime Minister Atef Sedki by detonating a bomb outside a suburban Cairo school last November.

The premier, passing in a motorcade, escaped injury but a 12-year-old pupil at the school died and 21 people were wounded, several of them her classmates. The incident caused an uproar among the public, as government-owned newspapers published many pictures of the dead girl, Shaima Abdel-Halim, and the wounded children. Shaima was given a martyr's funeral.

President Hosni Mubarak, the only appeal from a military court, reaffirmed the verdicts and executions a month ago, on April 3. Five other men were sentenced to prison, and one was acquitted.

Authorities said the five went to the gallows about 30 minutes apart, long enough to let the official hangman, policeman Helmy Sultan, prepare for the next condemned man.

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SARAJEVO (AP) - Bosnian Serbs prevented 160 British peacekeepers from reaching the eastern town of Gorazde yesterday and strengthening the UN contingent in the Muslim enclave.

The blockade reflected mounting tensions between the Serbs and UN troops, and the increasing willingness of Serbs to challenge the peacekeepers.

In a series of recent skirmishes, Bosnian Serb forces fired on UN troops. Danish tanks and Serb forces exchanged fire near Tuzla late Friday in a battle that the Serbs said killed nine civilians.

The Serbs also reiterated charges that the peacekeepers had joined the fighting alongside government troops, a claim the UN has vehemently denied.

French and Ukrainian reinforcements arrived in Gorazde on Monday. But the 160 British soldiers, sent to strengthen a total UN force of about 500, still were stuck in Rogatica, some 40 road kilometers north of the Muslim town, said UN spokesman Cmdr. Eric Chaperon.

"Negotiations continue" for the release of the 51-vehicle convoy, Chaperon said in Sarajevo. "They can't return for the moment. They are stuck."

Asked if they weren't hostages, he said: "We have

never used the word 'hostages.' We're not going to use it today."

The British convoy has been stuck at Rogatica since 2:30 a.m. Sunday. It had been blocked previously for several days at a Serb checkpoint just outside Sarajevo, about 55 kilometers to the west.

The chief UN diplomat for former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, met government leaders in Sarajevo yesterday and later was to see Serb leaders at their headquarters in nearby Pale, where he was expected to discuss the Rogatica impasse.

After the meeting, Bosnian Prime Minister Hans Silajdzic reiterated the government position that a cease-fire and further peace talks depend on full Serb withdrawal from in and around Gorazde.

"As long as the situation in Gorazde is not resolved, we cannot expect serious negotiations to continue," Silajdzic said.

Akashi said he agreed with Silajdzic "that Gorazde is, in a way, the precondition, is a test case whether we are serious about our intent to bring about a more solid peace here."

After 12 years of Lubbers, Dutch choosing new leadership

AMSTERDAM (AP) - Warm spring sunshine brought a rush of early voters yesterday as the Dutch chose new leadership to tackle surging unemployment, recession and a spiraling welfare bill.

Prime minister since 1982, the great Dutch consensus-builder Ruud Lubbers took himself out of the running for a new term.

That's just as well, since his

Christian Democrats were likely to lose their position as the largest party in power in the elections for the 150-seat Parliament.

The Labor Party, buoyed by unemployment surging at the highest rate since World War II, was expected to become the biggest party for the first time since 1977.

And the prime minister's post is expected to go to Labor leader

Wim Kok, a former top unionist and deputy prime minister since the current government took office in 1989.

The top post ordinarily goes to the leader of the party that garners the most votes.

Kok proved the most popular in a televised election eve debate between the main party leaders.

After Monday night's five-way

debate, 30 percent of television viewers sampled said Kok came out on top as the most commanding figure, proving more popular than the dour Elco Brinkman, Lubbers' designated successor, or the sometimes flippant Democrats 66 leader Hans Van Mierlo.

Also participating were the fourth major party, the right-wing Liberals, and Green Left, a leftist

environmental party.

Polls were open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. local time.

Although the Christian Democrats or their predecessor parties have been in every postwar government, party leader Brinkman's chances of succeeding his mentor, Lubbers, have diminished with the polls.

An election eve poll showed La-

bor winning 35 seats and the Christian Democrats 32 in the 150-seat Dutch parliament, a huge erosion of their current 103-seat majority block.

A Labor-led coalition would mean a new emphasis on job creation, perhaps even without the tax cuts Lubbers counted on to jump start the economy and provide new jobs.

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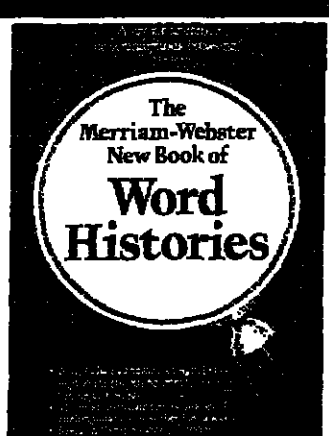
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The signing

TO say that not all Israelis share the government's faith in the "Gaza/Jericho First" agreement with the PLO is to state the obvious. At least half the population, if not substantially more, entertain grave doubts about today's signing.

This is not because Israelis care about retaining control of Gaza or Jericho. On the contrary. If the polls are indicative of the general mood, few Israelis believe that the country's security will suffer if the army is evacuated from either place. Gaza in particular is viewed as a crowded, violent strip, a hornet's nest, a thorn in Israel's side.

But the euphoria which characterized Israel's mood after the White House handshake has disappeared. Partly, the public's attitude has been adversely affected by the terrorist incidents which followed the Washington ceremony. It has become clear that, whether or not the agreement with the PLO is a harbinger of peace in the long run, terrorism has not disappeared.

The most ardent supporters of the agreement now concede that even after the army withdraws from Gaza and Jericho, terrorist acts will undoubtedly continue. Israel may feel that it is trading land for peace, but the Palestinians are obviously convinced that

peace will not bring them all the land they want. The armed struggle will go on, they say, until the last trace of the "occupation" disappears. Nor is it at all clear that they consider only Judea, Samaria, and Gaza as land under "occupation."

Nor are some of the conditions of the agreement designed to put Israelis at ease. That thousands of prisoners will be released is all too reminiscent of the debacle caused by the "Jibril deal," in which over a thousand terrorists were exchanged for three Israeli prisoners. The presence in the territories of these veteran gunmen and organizers raised the level of violence significantly. The army's announcement yesterday that each of the released prisoners will have to sign a commitment not to participate in terrorist acts for three years is hardly comforting. Surely the government does not expect those who intend to kill to be deterred by a signature on a piece of paper.

And yet all Israelis must hope that the government's faith in the wisdom of the move will be justified. If there is one thing all Israelis share, it is a wish for peace with security. The next months will tell if there is any reason to believe that the agreement with the PLO is capable of fulfilling this wish.

The loan guarantees

DOES anyone remember the loan guarantees? Arguably, it was the Likud government's failure to obtain them which caused its downfall in 1992, brought Labor to power, and made possible the Gaza-Jericho First agreement being signed in Cairo this morning.

Ironically, the idea of asking the US government to guarantee bank loans to the tune of \$10 billion was suggested by the Likud's finance minister Yitzhak Moda'i. Assuming that Israel would not be able to cope with the huge wave of immigration from the former Soviet Union, and aware of world sympathy for Israel in the wake of the Gulf War, Moda'i requested the guarantees in the expectation that the US would grant them without difficulty. After all, Egypt had attained a total "forgiveness" of its \$7 billion debt to the US.

But the Bush administration, the most unfriendly to Israel since Carter's, played hard ball. It used the request to demand a quid pro quo in the form of an Israeli pledge to halt home-building in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, and it made clear that the Labor party would have a better chance of getting the loans. During the Knesset election campaign, Labor exploited the national expectations of the tremendous boon such a vast amount could bring. It portrayed the Likud as mindless ideologues sacrificing the national good for the sake of the "settlements."

Now there is barely a mention of the loan guarantees - for the simple reason that they are not being used. In fact, they have proved a costly burden. Adhering to the agreement with Washington, the government, having qualified for the guarantees by freezing the settlements, drew \$2 billion in 1993 and \$1b. in March of this year. (An additional \$1b. is due in September.) Of this \$3b., \$45 million have been spent on commissions, while over \$1b. has been allotted to infrastructure construction, the Israel Electric Company and

other approved expenditures.

This means that the Bank of Israel still has \$1.8b. lying around. The Treasury would like to have the money to use at will. But the Bank of Israel refuses to allow its use outside the state budget and without proper oversight.

Yet even if the bank removed its objections, it is doubtful that much use for the money would be found. Obtained on the basis of a US guarantee, the interest on the loans is not particularly high, but it is still 7.5 percent. The money, deposited in European banks, makes the country's foreign currency deposits look good, but it earns only 3.5 percent, incurring a net loss of 4 percent, over \$70m. a year.

MK Silvan Shalom (Likud) has proposed a bill to abolish the agreement. Wisely, he believes that losing money on unnecessary loans is as extravagant as it is plain silly.

But since the money was originally supposed to help the absorption of immigrants, the government should consider investing it in newcomers. For example: one of the most painful absorption problems is the inability of scientists and other academics over 45 to find work. At least 75 percent of them are either jobless or employed in menial labor, because companies have an aversion to hiring older personnel, regardless of their qualifications.

The Zionist Forum for Soviet Jewry suggests that instead of paying these scientists unemployment insurance, the government should encourage employers to hire them by offering limited salary subsidies. The investment should bear fruit. The chances of these scientists and technologists proving themselves and working in their own profession are high, and their contribution to the economy will be immeasurably enhanced.

There are, undoubtedly, other viable ideas. But one thing is certain: to let the loans drain the Treasury to the tune of \$70 million a year for no apparent reason is the kind of insanity Israel can ill-afford.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"PERSPECTIVE"

Sir, - For some time now, your Sunday paper has included a page with comic strips. I am an old man, not American, but have read the Post for the last 40 years. I am ashamed to confess that I cannot understand these cartoons. They are supposed to be funny, I guess.

I don't need this kind of "fun" and, believe me, I am not the only one.

B. OUDKERK

Haifa.

SPORTS NEWS

Sir, - Yet another Friday (April 15) has passed with an almost nonexistent sports section. Despite the fact that almost no space was allocated to it, you saw fit to print an article on an alleged antisemitic remark by a baseball player, rather than actual scores of ball games.

May I remind you that one of the main reasons that people buy your paper is its coverage of sports, especially those of interest to people who have come from overseas. Pages full of advertisements do not satisfy the need for sports coverage; a feature article, which might make an interesting addition to a sports page, is no substitute for the actual sports news.

Please make sure that there is sufficient space for sports news every day.

LAWRENCE ISRAEL

Rehovot.

THE MISSING YEMENITE CHILDREN

Sir, - Reading a recent article by Raine Marcus, I was perplexed over the "alleged 4,500 Yemenite children gone missing 45 years ago" (1949 being my reckoning of 45 years ago).

I was Medical Officer in Sana'a from 1939-41 and knew the Jewish community there very well and still maintain contact with many in their subsequent present environment. I followed their fortunes while I served for five years at St. Luke's Hospital in Hebron and later still was medical officer in charge in the Aden Protectorate and indeed personally saw and then signed health certificates for Israel for each of the total of 4,000 men, women and children of the first phase of Magic Carpet. Before their camp closed, I was by invitation of its commandant, Dr. Olga Feinberg, and the Joint, guest of the Magic Carpet for two weeks in Israel. I visited the length

and breadth of the land, including two days and a night at the vast Yemenite concourse at Rosh Ha'ayin. Never did I hear of one child going missing, let alone 4,500.

Months later began the far larger spontaneous exodus totaling in all 45,000 from Yemen, including both protectates. It stretches any imagination to think of 10 percent going missing. The camp and airlift were highly organized and commanded the personal interest of the then president Ben-Zvi, who visited Aden and inspected the camp half a mile from my own house in the desert.

The whole operation is well documented in Operation Magic Carpet by Shlomo Berser; by Ruth Dayan in her autobiography; and by many others.

BERNARD C. WALKER
Bo'ness, W. Lothian, U.K.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Sir, - The letter from Zak Mazur ("Overdoing it," April 18) contains a blatant inaccuracy regarding the American Jewish Committee. The author attributes to the AJC a full-page advertisement in The New York Times which condemned the massacre of Moslem worshippers in Hebron. While the AJC publicly and forcefully deplored that act, it had no connection whatsoever with the said advertisement.

The allegation is all the more spurious in that Mr. Mazur, by his

own admission, is ignorant of the goals and principles of the AJC. America's pioneer human relations organization, AJC fights antisemitism and bigotry, and works to ensure Israel's security and well-being. It stands for pluralism, the protection of human rights and the enrichment of Jewish life both in Israel and in the Diaspora.

DR. MICHAEL B. OREN,
Director, Israel Office,
American Jewish Committee
Jerusalem.



Well, autonomy it ain't

MOSHE ZAK

EGYPT didn't wait for Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO leader Yasser Arafat to resolve remaining differences in the Israel-PLO agreement before inviting some 40 foreign ministers to attend today's scheduled signing ceremony in Cairo.

President Hosni Mubarak remembers how long the bargaining between Egypt and Israel over a small area like Taba lasted; and yet he was sure that Rabin and Arafat would quickly iron out the final kinks in meetings in Cairo.

He was sure Israel would give way both on the width of Palestinian territorial waters off Gaza and over the dimension of the Jericho enclave.

Mubarak's confidence derives from personal experience. Twelve years ago, he ordered a break in talks with Israel on Palestinian autonomy after Israel refused to expand the powers of the planned self-government authority drafted at Camp David.

Today, however, Israel has in effect agreed to dismantle the autonomy framework altogether. Not only has the term "autonomy" been omitted from the agreement, so have all the restrictions blocking full sovereignty.

• An autonomous zone cannot demand sovereign rule over 12 miles of territorial waters. Its external security is exclusively entrusted to the state conferring the autonomy.

• The World Bank's regulations limit the granting of loans only to states. But it is about to depart from its rules and extend a loan to the PLO or the Palestinian authority - implying indirect international recognition of Palestinian sovereignty. Even if there is a humanitarian urge to provide economic support to Gaza's population, there is no obligation to grant this support in the form of aid to an independent state.

• The PLO is signing an accord with UNESCO (the UN's cultural and scientific branch) to finance a museum commemorating the Palestinian struggle, and various other similar plans.

• An autonomous zone does not have an army, only a police force; even at Camp David the term used was "a strong local police force."

No one imagined a Palestinian army could be imported instead of locally recruited police. But this week, senior PLO negotiator Nabil Sha'ath spoke openly about Palestinian soldiers for the Gaza Strip.

• Autonomy deals with domestic

affairs, not foreign relations. Arafat promised that he would arrive in Jericho bearing only the title of PLO head. But at Nelson Mandela's inauguration ceremony, he will be wearing the hat of "president of the State of Palestine." Heads of state visiting Jericho will be received as such with the full honors required by protocol. And the

ing for time until the nation gets used to the notion. But that kind of delay cannot fill in the holes in the Cairo Agreement.

In autonomy arrangements, unlike deals embodying all the attributes of sovereignty, there is no immediate need to delineate the borders of the final settlement. In an agreement such as the one in Cairo, options for territorial compromise appear to be closed.

Once the PLO extorted the recognition that "Gaza and the West Bank are one integral unit" from us, the Palestinian authority could claim that it amounted to recognition of the borders of Palestinian rule. And the PLO is leaving its Tunis office behind to fly the flag of irredentism.

There was indeed mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO - but no obligation on the PLO's part regarding the territorial integrity of Israel. The Palestinian demand for an Israeli retreat to the 1947 Partition lines was one of the causes of the Six Day War.

As far as the "right of return" for Palestinian refugees is concerned, the Palestinians are striving to upset the Jewish majority west of the River Jordan.

Following an agreement, they will flood the small, heavily populated area of Gaza with some 50,000 inhabitants (soldiers of the "Palestinian Liberation Army," members of the administration in Tunis and their families, and Palestinians who will arrive under family-reunion arrangements).

It will be the beginning of a long campaign of migration by Palestinian refugees, who will be able to bypass the Rafiah and Jordan River checkpoints and land on the Gaza coast. This migration will increase the danger of a population explosion in Gaza, creating constant pressure on Israel's border.

The depressing sights of deterioration and poverty in the refugee camps, of Israeli soldiers contending with children throwing stones has thoroughly sickened our population. So we shan't be shedding any tears at the departure from Gaza.

We shall only begin sensing the pain when the predications of the chief of staff and former police inspector-general materialize - when terror sprouts in other places after Gaza is evacuated.

The writer, a veteran journalist, comments on current affairs.

Hurray! Today is a holiday

Yael Dayan

FAREWELL Gaza and satellites, and Jericho, and the rest of the occupied West Bank that will be included in the interim agreement that follows the "First."

Farewell and an easy parting - and not just because there is a sense of "good riddance." Gaza, the poor orphan strip that was tossed from hand to hand, is granted self-rule today. Gaza of the refugees, of the fishermen and the groves, of the Fatah and the Hamas, and of the open sewage and the highest birth rate in the world.

Gaza of the violation of human and civil rights, bereft of identity cards or passports, bereft of hope, sees today a light at the end of the dark present.

And this light is also a light for us - liberating and full of hope.

The agreement is good for our children, our security, and maybe even for our economy; but above all, for justice.

After 27 years of rule over another people, after the collapse of Communism and the elections in South Africa, we are freeing Gaza and Jericho and ourselves and our children from the occupation; from the common nightmare of being the occupied and occupier, from the fears and the injustices, from the dead and the wounded and the detained, from their humiliation and our shame.

Late, but with complete faith, we are putting an end to one of the

most difficult and ugly chapters in the history of the State of Israel. A chapter whose beginning was perhaps in necessity, its continuation in hardship and a distorted concept, on to power for its own sake.

We are freeing Gaza, Jericho and ourselves from the occupation

and ending today in a solution that, though imperfect, has a chance of success.

There is much hypocrisy in the vocal and violent opposition to the agreement. There is a public consensus about leaving Gaza and giving it to Palestinian authorities. And everyone knows that it is impossible to give Gaza without Jericho and without the rest of the West Bank after it.

All Israeli governments, one way or another, have agreed to self rule, in all areas except foreign affairs and defense. The pathetic, stupid demagoguery which presents the Gaza-Jericho agreement as one which undermines security and delays peace will not succeed.

The further claim that the autonomy agreement leads inevitably to a Palestinian state does not scare anyone. The Palestinians will have independence and a state and this will be the most definitive guarantee for true peace, equality between the nations and their right to self determination and a national home.

There are better days ahead. No one is promising the end of terrorism with the signing of the agreement, or that the Jewish settlements will remain in the occupied areas once the final status is agreed on. What this government is promising is a solution to the bloody conflict, normalization of the State of Israel and security and justice.

Today is a holiday. A day of celebration for the Gazans and for the inhabitants of Jericho. A holiday for those awaiting their turn in Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah and Jenin. A holiday for every citizen of the State of Israel.

All the doubts and the risks and the worries have been taken into account. We shall continue to pay the price of occupation in blood, in money and in internal dissension.

The government was correct in choosing to pay the price of peace instead of the price of occupation. And it deserves our thanks for its wisdom, morality and courage.

The writer is a Labor MK.

Shining example

TEDDY PREUSS

AS the signing of today's Cairo agreement approached, the peace bloc publicly called on Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin "to take an example from de Klerk," who, it said, had had the courage to make a decision. He had created confidence-building steps with his rival and risen above former prejudices to achieve a joint vision.

"You too could act like de Klerk," the appeal to Rabin concluded.

But Rabin is acting like F.W. de Klerk. He is striving for "a peace of the brave." The risks he is taking are no smaller than those the South African president took. De Klerk too has knives being wielded around him. Many people in his own camp oppose the great reform. Some have even broken away and joined the extreme right, engaging in terrorism and armed resistance.

Compared with that, Rabin has succeeded in taking his party with him, although the opposition to the steps he has taken is wider and more vociferous than white opposition to de Klerk.

But de Klerk has one great advantage: Nelson Mandela sitting across the hill. Unlike PLO leader Yasser Arafat and even the

Arafat waits for 'the Israeli de Klerk' - but he's hardly a Mandela

ANC leader's mentor Mahatma Gandhi, Mandela traversed the whole route of the Via Dolorosa of an underground fighter. At one time, Mandela used terrorism as a weapon, as long as the government refused to negotiate with him. He paid the full price: life imprisonment for terrorism and subservience to a foreign power (the USSR).

THE PALESTINIANS, on the other hand, discovered terrorism before ever heard of negotiations. Their Charter, which Arafat has again promised (for the umpteenth time) to revise, declares armed struggle as the strategy, not just the tactic. It took decades of terror, some heavy blows and one intifada to discover there is a precious mineral called negotiations.

This is how those weak, ambiguous Palestinian declarations concerning a political struggle and readiness to recognize the enemy came about. But a lot of blood was spilled before that. Some Palestinian terrorist strikes killed more people than all combined ANC operations during that group's struggle.

During Mandela's years in prison, the PLO chief (and his aides) "suffered" in opulent villas (without anyone urinating on his food). He was "forced" to fly to international conferences (usually by private plane) and endure the harsh humiliation of being addressed as "Mr. President."

Only rarely - usually inadvertently, as happened at Karameh in Jordan - was he caught in the line of fire.

Over the years, Arafat wailed, "Where is the Israeli de Klerk?" But after 27 years in jail, Mandela neither threatened nor promised vengeance. Once released, he hastened to the Rabin of South Africa to seek a modus vivendi with him.

Mandela tenaciously fought for freedom and equality for his people. But at the same time, he took care to ensure that yesterday's oppressor would come to no harm.

Even when he was forced to fight in opposition, Mandela was not afraid to denounce terrorists and provocateurs who tried to sabotage any compromise with the enemy. He didn't hide behind claims like "I have an opposition to consider," and - unlike Arafat - understood that his interlocutor also had an opposition to take into account. So he and de Klerk removed this argument from their lexicon.

Mandela called on his people not to try and destroy their enemies, from whom they had suffered much more than Arafat's people had from theirs. He asked them to forget the past and concentrate on the future.

Arafat hasn't done very much of this. He whines incessantly about the past, forgetting his role in the tragedy and injustice visited on his people. And his denunciation of attacks on Israelis has been no harsher than the Maccabi Tel Aviv and Haifa soccer teams' criticisms of other teams' players.

Arafat hasn't yet grasped that Yitzhak Rabin has an opposition just as he does, and as F.W. de Klerk does.

To our peace bloc, I would say: issue another appeal - "Arafat, take an example from Mandela!"

The writer is a senior journalist with the daily Davar.

'Schindler' educates and reeducates

Some Jewish leaders object to the movie being used to teach students and delinquents about the Holocaust, Sue Fishkoff reports from New York



Luis Bispo (left), a 10th grader at Manhattan's Chelsea High School, discusses the Holocaust with Alex Rosner at a private screening of 'Schindler's List.' Rosner and his parents were 'Schindlerjuden,' Jews who were saved by Oskar Schindler. (ADL)

Antisemitic crime and punishment

Schindler's List is being widely used to educate non-Jewish youth about the Holocaust, to counter incipient antisemitism, to encourage empathy between Jews and non-Jews and to dramatize the effects of intolerance.

It's also being used to punish. In what some experts see as a growing trend, judges in New Jersey and Pennsylvania have ordered young offenders convicted of antisemitic acts to watch Schindler's List in addition to performing other acts of restitution, to sensitize them to the Holocaust.

That may be expecting too much from what is, after all, only a movie.

"We can't expect Schindler's List to be a Band-Aid, to be used any time there's an incident of bigotry or racism," said Jeffrey Moss, New Jersey director for the Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

Moss appeared in juvenile court in Hackensack, New Jersey, on April 6, where Judge Gerald Escala was considering the case of three teenage boys who had desecrated a Jewish cemetery right before Rosh Hashana. The boys wrote Nazi slogans and put swastikas on more than 130 Jewish headstones in the Passaic Junction Cemetery.

Moss said in court that the boys' crime deserved incarceration, and that it was the worst case of cemetery desecration in New Jersey's history. But Escala ruled that the boys would pay for the damage, enroll in the ADL's "Stamp out Hate" program and watch Schindler's List.

"I call it a slap on the wrist," Moss said. The judge, who watched the film on April 11 along with the boys, their families and court officers, said he discussed it afterwards with the three teenagers.

"I think it had the desired effect of conveying to them the message I hoped they would get, that this was not fictionalized, that it really happened," he said. "I did not expect to get long, profound statements from these kids."

Michael Miller, director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, which is considering a Schindler's List project for the city's 30,000 public-school 12th-graders, said he sees "some value" in the judge's decision.

"But I don't want people to view seeing this film as a 'punishment,'" he said. "I would rather view it as a stepping stone toward humanizing our society." S.F.

HOLOCAUST survivor Alex Rosner didn't flinch when the African-American teenager asked to see his tattoo.

"Sure," Rosner replied nonchalantly, rolling up his sleeve to reveal the number indelibly recorded during his boyhood at the Birkenau death camp.

There was complete silence in the school auditorium as Rosner explained what the numbers stood for, adding with no discernible bitterness, "You can still see it after 50 years. They did a good job."

Rosner, 59, a survivor of several Nazi death camps in his native Poland, was speaking to more than 90 black and Hispanic inner-city students last month at Manhattan's Chelsea High School, two days after the group saw Steven Spielberg's Schindler's List at a screening sponsored by the Jewish Foundation for Christian Rescuers.

Rosner and his parents were "Schindlerjuden," snatched from the jaws of death by Oskar Schindler and put to work in his fake munitions factory.

The students' questions were disarmingly direct: How did you feel about losing your childhood? Did you hate the Germans? Have you ever asked yourself why this happened to you? Why didn't you fight back? Do you think the world has changed for the better?

Rosner answered every question in the same measured tones. "The past is the past," he said. "I'm sure for most of you, life has not been a bowl of cherries. That's life — a continuous game of cards. You're dealt a hand, with no choice of which cards. But you sure as hell can play the hand you're dealt the best way you know how."

The discussion at Chelsea High

School is just one example of the Schindler's List phenomenon that is exploding across America.

From the time the film opened in New York last December, and certainly since it swept the Oscars in March, the movie has become, for many Jewish as well as non-Jewish Americans, the definitive word on the Holocaust.

Although Spielberg consciously aimed his film at adult audiences — it carries an "R" rating — Jewish groups, interfaith leaders and schools across the country quickly seized upon the film's potential to impress and educate non-Jewish American teenagers about the Holocaust and its lessons.

The boards of education in more than 30 states have decided to send their entire high-school populations to free morning screenings on class time, according to Marvin Levy, marketing consultant for Amblin Entertainment, Steven Spielberg's film-production company.

Jewish groups and wealthy individuals sponsor screenings for inner-city children. A man in Utah donated \$50,000 to provide free tickets for the 15,000 high-school seniors in his state, according to the Salt Lake Tribune in Salt Lake City, Utah. A well-known New York Jewish philanthropist, who declined to be identified, provided free screenings for Harlem youths at the uptown Apollo Theater.

IN WHAT is surely the most ambitious project, Marian Ungar Davis, a Jewish community worker in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has declared it her goal to ensure that every one of the 3 million high-school seniors in America sees Schindler's List.

In February, she developed "The Schindler Project," a school curriculum that combines a substi-

dized screening of the film with classroom discussion and a meeting with a Holocaust survivor. Ungar Davis, who works out of her home, said schools in 42 states have contacted her about the project. Letters and calls pour into her office from all over, she said, begging for her funding, which is all privately raised as "a labor of love."

As of mid-April, Ungar Davis said that more than 100,000 students have gone through the program she sponsors. When some schools have been unable to pay even for the heavily discounted theater tickets, she has dug into her pocket for the funds.

"We have touched an entire generation of young people about the Holocaust," she says with pride. "The event has overtaken us," says Abraham Bayer, director of international concerns for the National Jewish Community Relations Council, the umbrella organization for 150 local JCRCs across America. "It's gone way beyond what Spielberg ever thought of originally."

THE SCHINDLER snowball started rolling the last week of December, when more than a dozen skinheads in Orange County, California, convicted of participating in four racist bombings and plotting attacks on synagogues, sat through Schindler's List as part of a three-day reeducational program.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, which cosponsored the program, is convinced that the film served its albeit limited purpose.

"Those who could be reached, were," he said. "Just as long as we understand that the film is a great catalyst, no more. It won't change a neo-Nazi overnight, or make an antisemite love Jews."

On February 28, New Jersey Governor Christine Whitman became the first government official to exploit the film's emotional potential. On the same day that National Islam spokesman Khalid Muhammad was due to appear at Trenton State College, spewing antiwhite and antisemitic hatred, Whitman sponsored four free screenings of Schindler's List, to which she invited students planning to attend Muhammad's speech later that evening.

New Jersey has since set up a statewide school curriculum on intolerance.

Spielberg added fuel to the film's fire in March during his acceptance speech for the Best Film Oscar when he appealed to "all the educators watching this program" to teach the Holocaust.

On April 11, Spielberg and California Governor Pete Wilson unveiled "The Schindler's List Project." Under the terms of the project, students in the last two years of high school will attend free morning screenings of the film at local theaters.

HILLEL KUTTLER
WASHINGTON

tos of white America this very day."

DEBORAH LIPSTADT, history professor at Atlanta's Emory University and author of Denying the Holocaust, said that "comparing victimization gets you no place: 'Mine was worse than yours, yours was worse than mine.'"

"With Khalid Muhammad, what's happening is a strong antisemitic overtone: 'You're getting more attention than me. Once again, it's Jews hijacking our place in history,'" Lipstadt said.

At its most basic level, denigrating the Holocaust is a dramatic means of rallying black radicals with a new twist on classical antisemitism, experts say.

"Straight speeches about racism get very little attention these days and are hardly an effective vehicle for expressing anger and getting support," said Milton Morris, vice president for research at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a local black think tank.

"I think there's an effort to heighten the level of conflict with the Jewish community for ends

that have little to do with the suffering of blacks and Jews," Morris said.

"There is a certain logic to it. Do you know any other event in Jewish life now to which there is greater emotion? ... They have found a nerve, a nerve they can really tweak and get a response."

At last week's event, speakers offered implausible numbers to illustrate black deaths attributable to slavery.

Tony Martin, chairman of the black studies department at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, referred to the "annihilation of 300 million of our people."

According to Muhammad's estimates, the death toll was 600 million people, including "150 to 200 million" who died on slave ships from Africa to the Americas.

Scholars dispute such claims. Emory J. Tolbert, chairman of Howard University's history department, said in an interview that the numbers were "certainly more than six million, but it's certainly not more than 100 million."

Nevertheless, he added, "I don't know how useful it is to

make those comparisons" between the Holocaust and black victims of slavery.

Morris said the numbers are not based "on any certain claim they have been researching and found A, B and C."

BUT WHY the use of similar terminology — talk of reparations, which they demand the US pay to the descendants of slaves — and of exaggerated numbers?

"It's a device that sells well," Morris said, adding that the reparations idea is not new. "Maybe the new wrinkle is comparing their claim to the German-Jewish experience."

"I have not come across research that characterizes the centuries of slavery as a Holocaust," he said. "There has been a new rendering of slavery juxtaposed against the Holocaust. It probably has a great deal of impact. I don't think it has a great deal of credibility."

Lipstadt said, "I don't think it'll take them too long to realize there's a possibility for general collaboration."

A one-upmanship of horrors in holocaust comparisons

A recent six-hour marathon at the largely black Howard University in Washington represented a new tactic — some say a low blow — in a campaign by black antisemites aimed at the US Jewish community.

About 1,500 blacks listened to a parade of speakers at "Documenting the Black Holocaust," whose central theme was that more attention should be paid to what they call their people's continuing Holocaust.

Such attacks on the Holocaust worry some Americans, white and black, for their attempt to draw Jews into a one-upmanship over who suffered more.

"This is becoming a major new theme for the Nation of Islam. It's a hot one," said David Friedman, regional director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

"They're saying: Look, Jews were responsible for the black Holocaust because we, after all, were controlling slavery."

The Nation of Islam's controversial leader Louis Farrakhan and his lieutenants have long charged Jews with the canard that they played a leading role in enslaving blacks in the US.

Adherents of the group, which was founded as a black separatist

organization in the 1930s by Elijah Muhammad, are now claiming loudly and publicly that Jewish suffering in World War II pales beside that experienced by blacks over the centuries.

EXAMPLES FROM last month's event at Howard University: "The black Holocaust is the worst, most vicious Holocaust that ever occurred in the annals of time," said Malik Zulu Shabazz. Shabazz is the founder of the Unity Nation, a Howard University student group that sponsored the campus event.

"Other people are coming into your country, continuing their Holocaust of misery and death," said Leonard Jeffries. Jeffries is chairman of the history department at City College of New York.

"We set forth here tonight that the black Holocaust was 100 times worse than the so-called Jewish Holocaust," said Khalid Abdul Muhammad.

Muhammad was until recently Farrakhan's spokesman.

"You are removed from your ghettoes of Warsaw and Cracow, white Jew."

"But these sons and daughters of Africa, we are still in the ghettos

A figurative beachhead in the battle for Judaism

LISA PALMIERI-BILLIG
ROME

ABOUT 1,500 Jews met recently in Italy and reclaimed "the beach of the Jews" for four days.

Jesolo's parish church was transformed into the "main synagogue," and Italian rabbis and European and Israeli diplomats and scholars debated the Jews' uncommon destiny.

The fashionable beach resort on a peninsula just north of Venice was taken over during the last weekend in April in what was something of a homecoming.

In 1938, when only 10 hotels lined 15 km. of golden sand, Jesolo became known as "the beach of the Jews."

"Mixed racial bathing" was forbidden by Mussolini, so Venetian Jews flocked here to escape the summer heat. Jewish refugees populated the town in 1944 and again in 1956, following the Soviet takeover of Hungary.

Tullia Sevi, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Commu-

nities, addressed the political moment by expressing concern over the success of neo-fascists in Italy's elections in March, including the election to parliament of Mussolini's granddaughter, Alessandra Mussolini.

"Vast sectors of international public opinion [are worried] about the participation in our government of forces that have not openly extirpated their fascist roots."

Italy then receded into the background. Members of the Italian rabbinate reflected on Amalek, an enemy of Israel from wilderness times to the early monarchy.

Today's Amalek, the rabbis said, is internal, not external, materializing when Jews disguise or hide their Jewish identity.

That internal Amalek facilitates the powers of external Amaleks, they said.

Warning bells were sounded by the Israelis.

"The chief rabbi of France recently declared that ours is not an assimilated, but an ignorant, generation of Jews," said Tel Aviv University political scientist

Prof. David Vital.

"We know we are Jews, but not what this means. Being acquainted with North American Jewry, I would say this is too moderate an assessment."

"Religious observance today often plays a divisive role both in the Diaspora and in Israel. The religious right's battle over peace with Israel's neighbors is conducted not strictly in geopolitical, strategic or military terms, but is bound to theological interpretations of Judaism's sacred texts," he said.

Vital predicted divisiveness in the future of the Jewish people. "In its origins, Zionism was at odds with Orthodoxy. The wheel has now turned full circle."

Shlomo Ben-Ami, a professor of history at Tel Aviv University and a former ambassador to Spain, painted a similar picture.

"The terms of peace will require so many painful compromises and concessions that consensus may simply not be possible." Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin may have to "opt for a daring decision, instead of desperately seeking an impossible consensus," Ben-Ami said.

He compared it to David Ben-Gurion's "bold decision to declare independence without having a wide consensus behind him." This is the fate of statesmen and prophets in moments "of historic decision."

Yosh Amishav, the embassy's press attache in Rome, noted that

80 percent of American Jews have never visited Israel and expressed concern about future Jewish unity.

"What will an 18-year-old Israeli have in common with an 18-year-old Italian or French Jew in the year 2000?" Amishav asked.

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Omani sands are shifting toward Israel

Officials' warm welcome and hot coffee does not mean a breakthrough in relations with Oman

LIAT COLLINS
MUSCAT

MOST Israelis would have been hard pressed to find Oman on a map two weeks ago. They may be wiser now, but there are clear signs they need not pack their passports yet.

The 22-member Israeli team to the multilateral talks on water in Muscat took along an equally large team of journalists and TV and radio crews. The resulting coverage may have given some the impression that a major change in relations is on the way.

Thanks to the media exposure, people here may now know how the Gulf state looks, what the people wear and how to get there. But despite the natural enthusiasm that resulted from the hospitality they met with in Oman, officials here are warning the public not to jump to conclusions. A warm welcome and cups of hot coffee do not mean a breakthrough.

Qatar is this week hosting the multilateral talks on arms control and talks on the environment are scheduled to be held in Bahrain in November. Yet Gulf leaders are not about to make a separate peace with what they still regard as a pariah state, observers say. There are small but clear signs to remind Israelis of this.

Take phone calls, for example. For the duration of the five-day talks, the Omanis lifted the block on calls to and from Israel. But the \$30-a-minute rate hardly encouraged locals to use the service. And the lines went dead almost the minute the Israelis left their Muscat hotel.

OMANI BUSINESSMEN, used to meeting Israelis in New York, London and Amsterdam, will carry on bumping into them — but only in the same western cities. Although business possibilities seem attractive, most Omanis remain apprehensive about dealing with Israel.

Omani officials said there may be one or two headline-grabbing deals, but not much more.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Youssef bin Alawi bin Abdullah met Israeli reporters on his own initiative. But he told

them the Arab boycott will remain in place until there is peace with neighboring countries and "a just solution" to the Palestinian issue.

Bin Alawi said Syria is the key to official relations. "If peace is achieved between Israel and Syria, we can start looking to the future... but one cannot foresee peace between you in Israel and a distant country [like Oman] at a time when there is no agreement on peaceful steps with the neighboring states."

"No one [in the Gulf] would be willing to move ahead of the neighboring states," he said.

But there are other options. While no one expects the blue-and-white flag to fly in Muscat soon, a quiet and gradual easing of official hostility is probable.

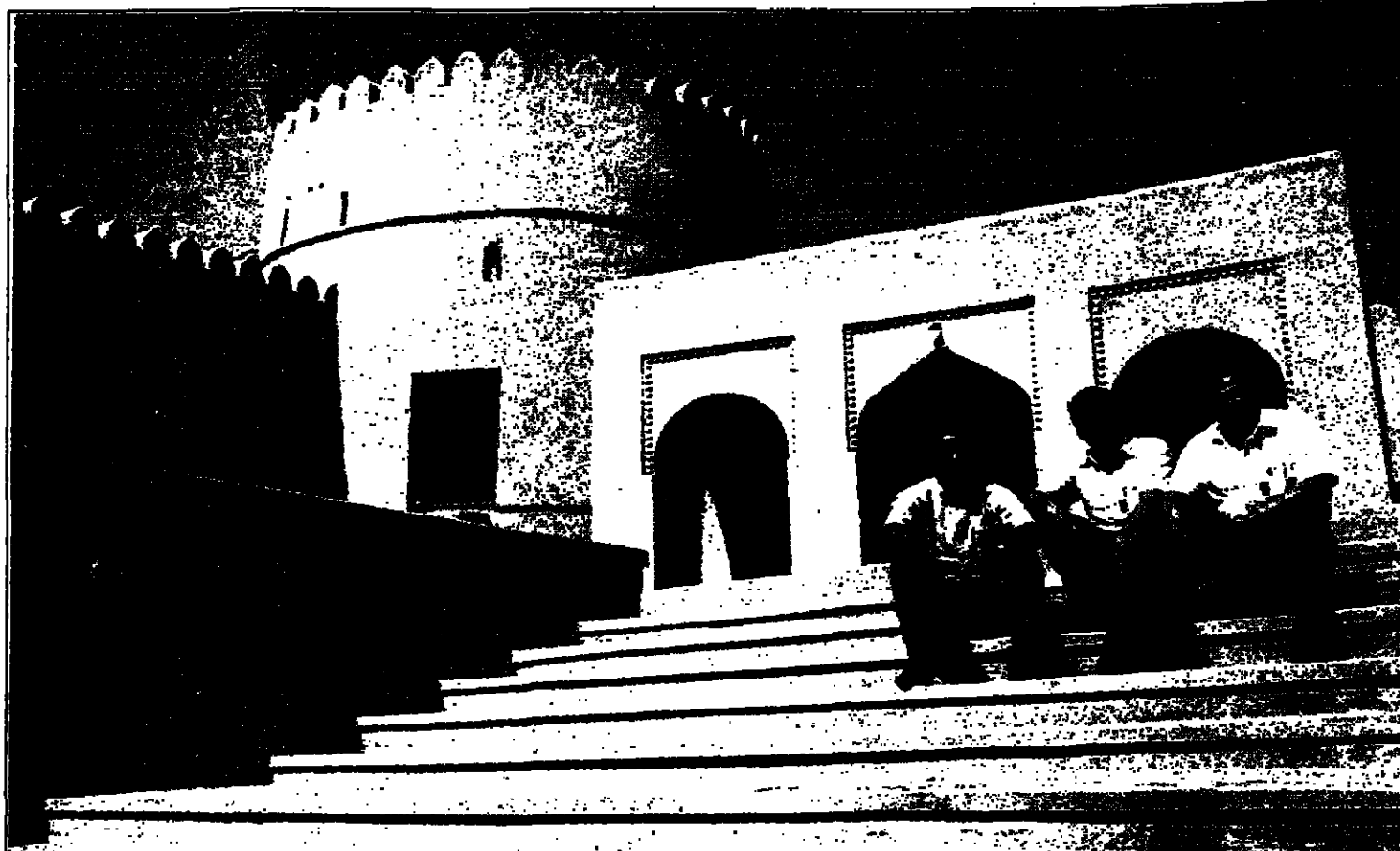
Guidebooks note it is illegal to bring Israeli currency into Oman, but the law is less likely to be enforced now that 44 Israelis have toured the country. A gradual thawing of relations can be expected, as has happened in Morocco, foreign ministry officials predict.

A SENIOR Western diplomat in Muscat told the Israelis the visit marked "a real step forward" and "the beginning of an upward trend." But he said other Gulf states are more concerned about the peace process, and this would hold the Omanis back.

Saudi Arabia in particular thinks the pace of the multilateral talks is too fast, he said. He emphasized that a solution to the Palestinian issue is at the top of the official Gulf and Omani agenda.

It is a line politely repeated by all the Omani officials met by Israeli journalists — but one. According to one Omani official, "You have to understand. If we open the gates to the Israelis, we would have to open them also to the Palestinians, and if both of you start coming here, we can say good-bye to the tranquility."

Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin, who led the delegation, said: "You have to remember that they weren't doing us any favors. They also hope to gain something. They respect us a lot and are interested in our help in certain fields."



Brigadier General Freddy Zach (from left), advisor on water to the Government Coordinator of Activities in the Territories, Palestinian delegate engineer Fadel Kaoush from Tunisia and Palestinian delegation head Dr. Riyad Al-Kudari from Gaza relax on the steps of Barka Fort in northern Oman. The fort, a major historical site and tourist attraction, was built in 1699 and restored in 1991 using traditional materials.

International exposure of Oman's role played a part in the state's offer to host the talks, officials said.

The Omanis took care to preserve their neutral stand in the Arab world while moving up a class in the international league.

Oman has traditionally enjoyed a role as peacemaker and is proud of its tradition of getting on well with everyone, diplomats say.

It has been involved in trying to solve disputes between northern and southern Yemenite factions, between Qatar and Saudi Arabia and between Qatar and Bahrain in a dispute over offshore islands.

It maintains diplomatic relations with both Iran and Iraq and did not cut relations with Egypt following the Camp David Accords and peace treaty with Israel

— nor with Iran during the Iran-Iraq War.

THERE ARE also reasons closer to home which make Muscat keen on improved relations. It has an eye on Israeli expertise in water issues, agriculture, health and technological training.

Although there is no shortage of water in Oman and the tap water is safe to drink, it comes at a price. Most of the water is taken from the Arabian Sea and desalinated. It costs \$2 a cubic meter to produce. Here, the cost is between 65 cents and 85 cents for the equivalent amount.

Therefore, experts say, it is no coincidence that Oman chose to host the talks on water or that the first project announced was Israeli help for the desalination research

project in Oman, with exchange visits of experts.

Desert agriculture, too, is an attractive proposition in the arid land which so far produces most of its own fruit and vegetables but has little to spare for export.

"One field where Omanis know that Israel has expertise is in the health field, particularly its genetic specialists," Beilin said. With a native population of just 1.5 million living in a traditional Arab society, marriage between relatives is common and the consequent genetic problems occur even among the upper classes.

Another area where Oman might expect to benefit from improved relations is the technological training of the next generation. Some 65 percent of the Omani population is under 35, and the

only university opened in 1986. Most of the work, at nearly all levels, is done by transient workers from the Indian subcontinent.

Sultan Qaboos brought modernity to what was an essentially medieval country after he seized control from his father in a 1970 palace coup. He is well aware that the post-oil age is on its way. Omanis are going to have to work and need to be taught the necessary skills for the future.

For these reasons, the door to the Gulf state has been left ajar, if not open, to Israelis and the two countries are likely to increasingly ignore the fact that they have no official ties.

The writer was The Jerusalem Post's staff journalist at the talks in Oman

Egypt earns its role as best man

JONATHAN WRIGHT
CAIRO

THE best man and master of ceremonies when Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO leader Yasser Arafat sign a Palestinian self-rule agreement in Cairo today will be Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

And, like the bride and bridegroom at a wedding, the signatories will no doubt turn to the matchmaker and say that, without him, it would not have been possible.

Cairo newspapers likewise trumpet "Egypt's role," and visiting dignitaries pay the customary tribute to their hosts.

But diplomats say there is substance behind the rhetoric.

For in the months since Israel and the PLO got engaged in Washington last September, Egypt has frequently had to step in to patch up their quarrels, steering the relationship away from the rocks whenever violence threatened to derail it.

At least between these two old enemies, Egypt has assumed one of the mandates of the US, the traditional middleman between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

Building on the experience of its own peace negotiations with Israel in the late 1970s and on the good relations it has had with the PLO since reconciliation in 1983, Egypt has tracked the detailed negotiations step by step.

In times of tension, Israeli ministers and leading PLO members have come together in the presence of Mubarak or his tireless and level-headed foreign minister, Awni Moussa.

IN THE lobbies and corridors of a succession of hotels, junior Egyptian foreign ministry officials have tactfully gauged the right balance between intervening and standing aside.

Though naturally inclined to favor the Palestinian case, Mubarak and his lieutenants have not hesitated to speak their minds to the PLO when they thought its demands unrealistic.

"Egypt has given the Palestinians more than the Palestinians gave themselves," said Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat.

"Egypt and its government and its Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been working day and night to make this agreement succeed," added PLO delegation chief Nabil Sha'ath.

In comparison, the US, in the form of Secretary of State Warren Christopher, stepped in only at the last moment to push the negotiations over the hump, he added.

"The Americans, just by being here at this time, indicated to all the parties that it is time to finish... This has come only in its clear form now," he said.

US officials say that, in effect, Cairo and Washington divided the work of mediation between them. Egypt took charge of the PLO-Israeli talks, while the US concentrated on the Syrian-Israeli track.

But other diplomats say the Clinton administration made little contribution to the talks in Egypt because it lacks experience in foreign affairs and does not have the will to invest much effort in Middle East peace.

The US president's few pronouncements on the Arab-Israeli conflict have mostly raised the hackles of the Arab states.

The US knew little about the secret PLO-Israeli talks that led to the September agreement.

For Egypt, on the other hand, the stakes have been high in the race between Middle East peace and war.

Egyptian officials say conflict in the Middle East has deterred foreign investment, diverted government money from civilian to military projects and helped Moslem militant movements, which thrive on sympathy for the Palestinians.

(Reuters)

Lights, camera, (terrorist) action

MONA ELTAHAWY
CAIRO

A bearded man in the white robes of a Moslem militant ransacks a jewelry shop, torches a video club and considers the damage with a satisfied look.

It is not an attack by militants fighting to topple the Egyptian government, but the opening of *Al-Irhabi* (The Terrorist), the film that has moved militants from the headlines onto the screen.

The film, which went on general release in heavily guarded cinemas in March, stars veteran comedy actor Adel Imam as a militant who sees the error of his ways after living as a fugitive with an Egyptian family.

Although many praise *Al-Irhabi* as a brave challenge to religious militancy, others criticize its simplistic characterizations, or complain that it echoes the government line by presenting militants as brainwashed agents financed from abroad.

The film reproduces real militant attacks such as the jewelry and video shop raids, an attack on a tourist bus and the killing of a prison guard and an anti-fundamentalist writer.

National newspapers and magazines herald the film, produced by an independent company with no government financing, as an overdue treatment of the growing in-

fluence of extremist groups.

"The primary plus for *Al-Irhabi* is its bravery in breaking into this dangerous and thorny area. It is bravery that forces everyone to respect this experiment," critic Ali Abou Shadi said in the newspaper *Akhbar al-Youn*.

He went on to say that although the film presented "shallow stereotypes" and did not examine the roots of militancy, "we cannot ask for everything of one film made bravely by people who have broken through... fear and expressed their vision of their nation's crisis."

BUT POLICE trucks outside cinemas showing *Al-Irhabi* are reminders of an attack in the south Cairo suburb of Helwan during the Cairo film festival in December.

The militant group Gama'a al-Islamiya considered some of the festival films immoral and a policeman was killed by militant gunfire.

The title *Al-Irhabi* is in line with the government policy of referring to all militants as "terrorists," and the three-hour epic is pep-

pered with stereotypes of militants, focusing on sexual frustration.

The leading character, who has given up his job to join the cause, fantasizes he is seducing a voluptuous neighbor. He sees temptation everywhere he turns, from Barbie dolls to Madonna posters.

The film's release comes on the heels of a month-long soap opera called *al-Aida* (The Family) dealing with the socioeconomic changes in Egyptian society since the 1967 Six Day War.

The soap presented Islamic militancy as one such phenomenon, depicting its leaders as power-hungry demagogues who exploit the social and financial plight of young Egyptians.

The serial was produced by state-run Egyptian television. But in a country where state censorship ensures that reports of national political violence rarely, if ever, make it onto news broadcasts, taking militants into the nation's living rooms was a brave move.

The belated entry of cinema and television into the turmoil of opposition to terrorism will give millions of silent and confused viewers a way beyond the clichés of security and official channels to understand this phenomenon. It will make awareness a key which all of society can use to oppose terrorism," Salama Ahmed Salama said in *al-Ahram* Weekly.

(Reuters)

In Syria, the times they are a'changin'

G.G. LABELLE
DAMASCUS

ELENA Troshina, the singer at the Piano Bar, tired of songs from her native Russia the other night and switched to one of her favorites. Out came "Summertime, and the livin' is easy..."

Her change from "Dark Eyes" to Gershwin was no surprise at a place where American jazz blares as a French fashion show flashes across the video screen. Syrian patrons sing along with everything from "O Sole Mio" to American pop songs.

The new restaurant in the old Christian quarter of Damascus reflects the desire of Syrians to move from the political wilderness into the modern world of videos, computers, international trade and tourism.

In some ways, the government is going along. It allows faxes and, although satellite dishes are forbidden, generally ignores the smuggled ones sprouting on the roofs of the wealthy.

Syria is importing and exporting more. Most of its foreign trade used to be barter with the Soviet bloc — cheap consumer goods for arms — but now men's suits made in Syria are sold in Europe and the US.

The government has dropped its monopoly on manufacturing tomato paste, and one Syrian company even makes that most American of products, peanut butter.

Foreign tourism increased from 1.4 million in 1990 to 1.9m. last year, and the government projects

2.1m. for 1994. About 80 percent of the visitors are from nearby Arab countries, but more Europeans and Americans are coming.

Optimists hope for a peace agreement with Israel followed by increasing economic and political freedom. The government wants to get off the US list of countries that sponsor terrorism, which would open the way for American investment and the sale of sophisticated technology to Syria.

Some powerful forces oppose economic and political change, however, so the road to modernization may be rough.

STATE-OWNED industry will not give way easily, particularly with unemployment near 30% and more than half of Syria's 13m. people under age 15, creating an even greater need for jobs in the future. The entrenched security apparatus also is not eager to loosen its grip.

A businessman, who asked that his name not be used, said entrenched political and financial corruption means new investment will enrich only the powerful.

Still, things do seem to be changing. Japanese and Korean cars are replacing the 1950s and '60s Buicks and Chevrolets held together by baling wire and kept running because of high import duties on new vehicles. At least 10 hotels are planned for visitors to

Syria's Roman ruins, Crusader castles and Islamic monuments.

As "Bye, Bye, Bye, Delilah" pours forth at the Piano Bar, it is hard to imagine Syria not opening to the world. After all, Damascus was a hub on the ancient trade routes that carried goods — and ideas — between East and West.

Diplomats insist the government is loosening its grip on the economy, giving the Syrians a chance to display once again the talents that have made them master merchants and traders.

In May 1991, a new law was passed that began opening the bureaucracy-throated socialist economy to private enterprise and foreign investment. Law 10, as the measure is called, has enabled hundreds of businessmen to import machinery and raw materials to improve their products.

Syria still has a long way to go before it can compete on the international market. In the Middle Ages, Syria was a crossroads of caravan routes between Europe and the Orient. The name of its capital became a mark of quality.

Now, finally, the "made in Syria" label is being rejuvenated. Supermarket shelves are crammed with Syrian-made products that sell for about one-third the price of imports.

"We're like children full of excitement about the possibilities that lie ahead," said Mansour Marina, who owns a boutique and a clothing factory that sells 30,000 suits a year in California.

(Associated Press)

No political rallies on Haj, Saudis warn

DUBAI (Reuters) — Saudi Arabia will ban Iranian pilgrims from holding political rallies on this year's Haj, the annual Moslem pilgrimage, Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef Bin Abdul-Aziz said.

The official Saudi Press Agency quoted Prince Nayef as saying that Saudi Arabia has officially informed Iran that its pilgrims will not be allowed to hold rallies on the Haj, which reaches its climax later this month.

Asked about reports that the Iranians were planning rallies, Prince Nayef said: "I have heard of this and read about it... They said they will [hold rallies] and we say, no, they won't."

"They know it will not happen, and they have been informed of this," SPA quoted him as saying.

Tehran Radio had said earlier that a group of Iranian pilgrims left for Saudi Arabia after being told it was their duty to hold political rallies in defiance of a Saudi ban.

It said Ayatollah Mohammad Mohammadi Reza Shahri, Iran's top pilgrimage official, told the first batch of departing pilgrims about the "importance of holding the Disavowal of the Infidels rallies, and stressed the need for pilgrims to take part in that Islamic activity."

Iran's ruling clergy say that the Haj will not be complete if Moslems are not allowed to express their anger toward what Iran sees as the enemies of Islam, mainly the US and Israel.

Saudi Arabia's conservative leaders ban any political activity during the Haj to holy sites in the kingdom.

Iranian pilgrims held a political rally during last year's Haj, but it was confined to a big tent inside their compound.

There were no reports of trouble with the Saudi security forces.

Starting today, Foreign Editor Thomas O'Dwyer will also edit the weekly Middle East Page.

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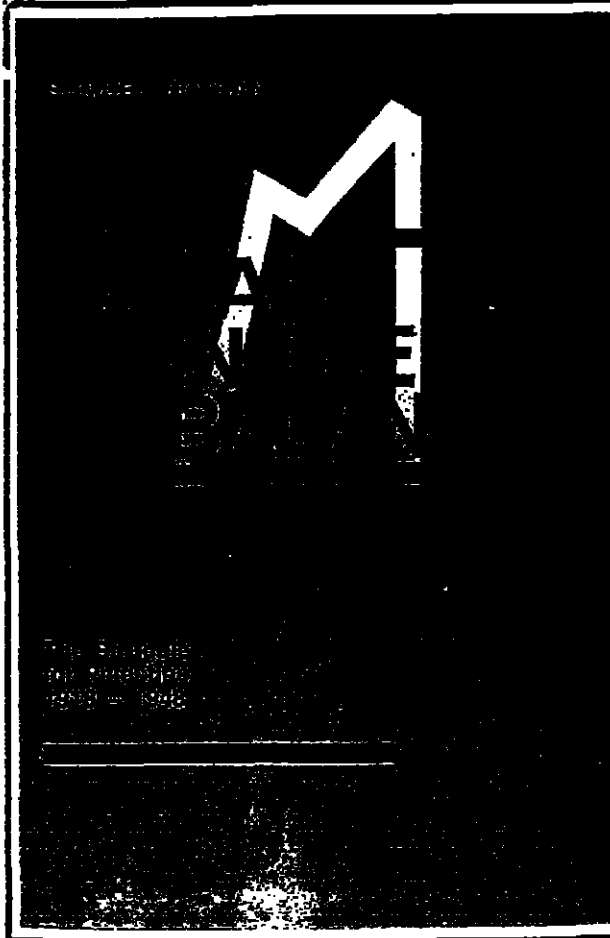
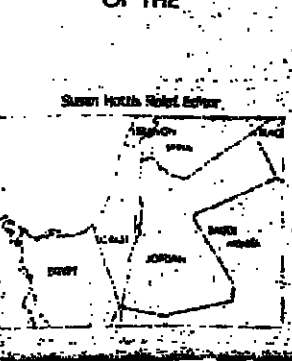
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BUSINESS & FINANCE

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 1994

9

El Al's privatization proposal being readied for cabinet approval

THE Government Companies Authority yesterday announced it is preparing El Al's privatization proposal for cabinet approval and reviewing several options for the sale of Shikun Ufrah.

The authority also decided to delay by two weeks the final date for submitting bids for Israel Shipyards.

At a meeting with El Al management, Government Companies Authority director Yossi Nitzani discussed the timetable for the first stage of the privatization.

The government plans this year to initially sell company shares to the public here and abroad.

They also discussed the performance of an appraisal of the company's acquisition value, protecting the government's vital interests in the company before embarking on the sale and coordinating between the government and the company.

Before the company is put on sale, the government will take the legal steps to take it out of receivership, the Treasury announced.

Nitzani reviewed with Finance Minister Avraham Shohat options to put Shikun Ufrah back on the block after the government's attempt to sell the company through an offering of all its shares in the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange was aborted when the issue's underwriters pulled out at the last moment.

Shohat noted that to speed up the process, the government should sell separately a controlling

interest and the remaining shares should be offered to the public.

The final decision on the structure of the sale of Shikun Ufrah will be decided shortly, the Treasury reported.

The Treasury delayed the deadline for submitting bids for Israel Shipyards to May 19, in response to requests from interested parties.

More than 10 firms have shown interest in the company, which will be sold in its entirety to private investors.

Court places Tsubari under house arrest

RAINE MARCUS

work at Gmulet and ordered his phone line disconnected until the end of the month.

His cellular phone and passport were also ordered confiscated, and he was barred from contacting other suspects in the case.

During the hearing, Securities Authority investigator Reuven Kovent said Tsubari was also suspected of committing additional stock manipulation offenses. Tsubari allegedly helped a port-

folio manager dump low-value shares.

Through Gmulet, Tsubari allegedly bought NIS 17m. in shares to increase interest in the stocks and cause an artificial rise in their value, Kovent said.

The purchase was made without the Gmulet investment committee's authorization, as regulations require.

Tsubari, who denies all allegations, is refusing to cooperate with investigators, and may even try to flee the country if released on bail, Kovent said.

Provident funds post 2.7% real yield

JOSE ROSENFELD

PROVIDENT funds brought in an average real yield of 2.7 percent last year after a buoyant stock market during the second half of the year reversed their dismal performance in the first half, according to the Treasury's semi-annual report issued yesterday.

During the second half of the year, the funds' average yield was 7.2% compared to 4.2% in the first half, as stock and bond prices bounced back. The general stock index jumped 38.2%, while the general bond index rose 16% in the second half of 1993.

These sharp changes reflect how the funds are becoming more exposed to market fluctuations as they redeem non-tradeable government bonds, which the Treasury stopped issuing in 1985.

As a result, the funds' assets include a greater proportion of stocks and tradeable bonds.

The report, which compares the performance of all provident funds (*kupot gemel*), shows that Bank Mizrahi's Orit and Shomron and Bank Tefahot's Tefahot Legit Hazahav posted yields far outstripping those of their general provident fund competitors.

The three brought in net real yields of 21.3%, 16.7% and 6.9%, respectively.

Mizrahi also outdid the competition in specialized funds which invest in specific instruments, such as bonds or stocks.

Hinanit Maniot, Mizrahi-Netivot's Lahit and Hinanit Nazil posted yields of 27.9%, 13.7% and 13.5%, respectively.

The top performing training funds (*keren hishtalmu*) were Ofakim, followed by Mizrahi's Asaf and Mizrahi-Netivot's Nirit. The three brought yields of 6.1%, 5.7% and 5.0%, respectively.

Mizrahi also outperformed its competitors in worker compensation funds. Ma'anak, Mizrahi-Netivot's Eshkol and Pizum Mizrahi yielded 6.9%, 6.6% and 5.2%, respectively.

The three funds which showed the best average yield over six years included Mizrahi's Shomron (13.2%), Orit (12.2%) and Bank Otzar Hachayal's Habazon (6.8%).

The average six-year yield for all funds was 5.4%. Last year's average yield was influenced by the make-up of the funds in the following manner.

Stocks brought in an average yield of 19.4% and contributed 87.1% to the funds' total profits. Tradeable bonds bore negative yields and contributed to a loss of 51.6%.

By contrast, non-tradeable instruments contributed 65.5% to profits. Other instruments, mostly liquid assets, brought in negative yields of 1%, contributing a similar loss of profits.

Total provident fund assets rose 3.9% to NIS 97.4 billion last year, compared to the 15% increase in 1992. The slowdown is attributed to the 37% drop in fund member deposits to NIS 1.78b. from NIS 2.8b. in 1992.

Panel suggests using US loan guarantees to help companies

JOSE ROSENFELD

THE government may promote local exports by using US loan guarantee funds to help businesses acquire distribution systems or production facilities abroad, according to recommendations of a government-appointed panel.

The panel, headed by Teva managing director Eli Hurwitz, was appointed a year ago by Industry and Trade Minister Micha Harish to recommend ways of developing and creating means to encourage exports.

Hurwitz, who handed the panel's report to Harish on Monday, said the recommendations were intended for companies of all sizes operating in the country.

The report recommended assistance through long-term loans and government guarantees to buy distribution systems or production facilities abroad. The panel recommended that the business invest 40 percent in the effort, while the remaining 60% would be financed by means of 12- to 15-year loans.

Those loans would be extended by commercial banks using the resources provided by the US loan guarantee funds. The government would guarantee 75% of those loans, while the banks would guarantee the remainder.

The panel also recommended supporting exporters who use trading centers abroad based on the model of the existing center in Rotterdam.



Harish intends to adopt the recommendations. (Isaac Harari)

It also suggested establishing a foreign trade council made up of government and business organization representatives that will propose export promotion programs and follow up with their implementation.

The report suggests strengthening the country's foreign commercial missions by including foreign service officials in the country's export marketing effort.

The report also recommended expanding the export promotion fund's existing criteria.

Harish announced he intends to adopt the recommendations relating to his ministry and work for the implementation of the remaining recommendations.

Gov't wants \$300m. more spent on budget from US loan guarantees

JOSE ROSENFELD

FINANCE Minister Avraham Shohat yesterday defended the government's management of the US loan guarantee funds and announced Israel's request to allow an additional \$300 million to be spent on the budget.

Speaking in the Knesset, Shohat rejected accusations that arguments between his ministry and the Bank of Israel have cost the country \$80m.

Shohat pointed out that the Americans agreed to allow \$600m. of the \$2 billion a year to be spent for budgeted infrastructure development.

He added that the government is currently requesting that the US allow an additional \$300m. to be spent on the state's research and development budget.

Shohat admitted that part of the

funds are not being actively used, although hundreds of millions of dollars were borrowed by the Israel Electric Corporation.

Shohat said he saw nothing wrong with the fact that part of the money, while not in use, is placed in short-term deposits which pay less than the 7% a year the government pays for the funds.

He noted that those funds serve as a foreign currency "umbrella", which enables the economy to import the goods necessary for its expansion without running out of foreign currency.

He said that although the government already raised \$3b. in US funds, the country's foreign currency reserves have not grown, since the business sector has been constantly tapping into those reserves.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Hasbro establishes Israeli subsidiary: The US-based Hasbro Inc., the largest toy manufacturer in the world, yesterday announced the establishment of an Israeli subsidiary which will manufacture, market and distribute a wide range of Hasbro toys here. The subsidiary was established in partnership with the Rafi family, the owners of Jerusalem Pencils. The worldwide toy manufacturer owns 75 percent of Hasbro Israel shares and the Rafi family holds the remaining 25%.

Bank Leumi announces new appointments: Bank Leumi announced a number of new appointments at its capital market and financial services division yesterday. Eli Avraham, manager of the bank's mutual fund company Leumi Pia, was named head of the bank's provident funds division. Michael Tzuriel, previously deputy manager of Ofek securities and investment company and Leumi Pia, was appointed Leumi Pia's managing director. Zvi Amit, previously managing director of Leumi Securities New York, was named managing director of Ofek.

Machteshim develops oil spill breakdown technique: An ecologically sound biological technique for oil spill breakdown has been developed by Machteshim Chemical Works and Tel Aviv University. The new process has been awarded a prize by the Council for a Beautiful Israel.

TAT Aero Equipment reports NIS 20 million net profit: TAT Aero Equipment has reported a NIS 20 million net profit, double the NIS 10m. net profit in 1992. Revenues rose to NIS 77.6m. from NIS 64.5m., with the bulk of the sales revenue coming from subsidiary companies. The report emphasized that revenues included those from long-term contracts calculated by date of completion. In addition, two share issues were floated in the US last year, raising \$19m.

500,000 redeem Peace for Galilee loans: A total of NIS 315 million in Peace for Galilee compulsory loans has been redeemed at postal banks by the public during the past year, the Postal Authority announced yesterday. Some 500,000 people redeemed the loans, but 300,000 who have still not done so are owed a total of NIS 320 million.

The loans were deducted from wages between July 1982 and April 1983 to help pay for Lebanon War expenses. The postal banks charge a much smaller commission than the commercial banks, the Postal Authority said.

Demand for workers rises 3% in April: There was a three percent rise in demand for workers last month, according to a Manpower internal survey. Demand for temporary employees jumped 7%. An 11% increase was registered in three separate areas — academia, management and industrial production.

Mivtahim submits complaint against La Nationale

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

THE Mivtahim Pension Fund yesterday submitted a complaint to the supervisor of Capital Markets and Insurance against La Nationale insurance company's publications.

Mivtahim managing director Ben-Ami Amiram said La Nationale advertisements mislead the public and contain inaccurate information.

"We complained about La Nationale's wasteful and inaccurate advertisements, which are meant to mislead the public," he said.

In the complaint, Mivtahim argued that La Nationale's announcement of its signing of an agreement with the Histadrut Garage Association and Mivtahim is not true.

"There is no agreement of this kind, not in writing and not verbally," said Amiram. "During the last few months, La Nationale asked to join in the agreement, but we objected."

Mivtahim's complaint also said La Nationale's announcement that Garage Association members are obliged to join its pension plan no later than this month is not true. La Nationale managing director Moshe Peretz told Israel Radio that all the company's publications are correct. He said Mivtahim's complaint merely reflects its alarm with La Nationale's pension plan.

Civil aviation body blasted for harming liberalization

HAIM SHAPIRO

THE Tourism Ministry yesterday stepped up its campaign against the Civil Aviation Authority, charging that authority head Menachem Sharon deliberately sabotaged the government's liberalization of passenger airline traffic policy.

In response, Sharon said the facts showed he had carried out the policy and added that the criticism was the result of a clash between the ministry and a small number of El Al officials.

The dispute centers around government decisions allowing foreign airlines to carry more than

half the passengers to Israel.

The Tourism Ministry said that although the government decided to initiate these policies immediately, Sharon decided to do so only gradually.

Sharon, who had been the chairman of the inter-ministerial committee which recommended the liberalization, said he was carrying out the program.

This was evident, he said, in the fact that there were more flights and greater competition, with a resulting lowering of airline fares. More permits for charter flights have also been granted, he said.

Court upholds right of airlines to cancel travel agencies' payment

EVELYN GORDON

THE airlines had every right to unilaterally cancel a two percent fee paid to travel agencies as compensation for inflation, even though the two sides had a contract regarding the payment, the Supreme Court ruled yesterday.

The ruling was in response to an appeal by the Association of Tourist and Travel Agencies in Israel and three travel agencies against the Panel of Airline Companies in Israel and 16 airlines.

The dispute stemmed from inflation-generated losses in the early 1980s. Prior to this, travel agencies sold tickets, which are denominated in dollars, according to their shekel value on the date of

sale, and turned this shekel sum over to the airlines on the fifteenth of the month.

During the years of hyperinflation, however, this money had lost much of its value by the fifteenth. In 1983, therefore, the rules were changed: payments now had to be according to the exchange rate of the dollar on the fifteenth.

At this point, the travel agencies began losing money, since to preserve the dollar value of their shekels they had to deposit them in special accounts for which the banks charged about 2% fee.

Thus, to compensate the agencies, the airlines agreed to pay them an extra 2%, on top of the 9% commission they already received.

At the end of 1985, however, the airlines unilaterally canceled the 2% payment.

Justices Yitzhak Zamir, Theodor Orr and Elihu Matza ruled that, like most economic agreements, the 2% deal was not meant to remain in force if changed circumstances made it unnecessary.

In this case, the 1985 Economic Stabilization Plan both reduced inflation, lowering the travel agencies' exchange rate losses, and eliminated the special bank accounts, thereby eliminating the 2% fee.

State of Israel

ISRAEL LANDS ADMINISTRATION

ISRAEL LANDS ADMINISTRATION MORIAH JERUSALEM DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LTD.

Lease offered on residential plots for low-rise construction in Ramot 06, Jerusalem (total of 42 houses)

Bids are invited from those interested in signing a 2 year development agreement, after which those concerned will sign a 49 year lease with an option to extend for another 49 years, for the plots, the details of which are:

Invitation to Tender 24/94/Yod Mem

Plot	Approx. Area, sq.m.	Area for Registration, sq.m.	Development Costs, NIS
142	705	840	488,705

* According to Urban Building Plans 4192 and 4192a, 6 row cottages of 3 stories, over an area of 840 sq.m., may be built on the plot. Service areas, as specified in the Urban Building Plans, may also be erected.

Invitation to Tender 25/94/Yod Mem

Plot	Approx. Area, sq.m.	Area for Registration, sq.m.	Development Costs, NIS
143	701	840	488,705

* According to Urban Building Plans 4192 and 4192a, 6 row cottages of 3 stories, over an area of 840 sq.m., may be built on the plot. Service areas, as specified in the Urban Building Plans, may also be erected.

Invitation to Tender 26/94/Yod Mem

Plot	Approx. Area, sq.m.	Area for Registration, sq.m.	Development Costs, NIS
144	619	840	488,705

* According to Urban Building Plans 4192 and 4192a, 6 row cottages of 3 stories, over an area of 840 sq.m., may be built on the plot. Service areas, as specified in the Urban Building Plans, may also be erected, but not additional service areas or basements.

The commercial area will include a mail distribution center with 225 post office boxes, to be built by the successful bidder. This area will not be included within the framework of the building rights of the plot.

Invitation to Tender 27/94/Yod Mem

Plot	Approx. Area, sq.m.	Area for Registration, sq.m.	Main Area for Residential Commerce, sq.m.	Development Costs, NIS
145	1,766	320-2,240	1,678,621	

* According to Urban Building Plans 4192 and 4192a, 8 row cottages of 4 stories, in an area of 1,120 sq.m., may be built on the plot for registration is 2,240 sq.m. of which a commercial area, for up to 8 shops, in an area not exceeding 320 sq.m. may also be built. Service areas, as specified in the Urban Building Plans, may also be erected, but not additional service areas or basements.

The commercial area will include a mail distribution center with 225 post office boxes, to be built by the successful bidder. This area will not be included within the framework of the building rights of the plot.

Invitation to Tender 28/94/Yod Mem

Plot	Approx. Area, sq.m.	Area for Registration, sq.m.	Development Costs, NIS
146	1,148	1,120	626,273

* According to Urban Building Plans 4192 and 4192a, 8 row cottages of 3 stories, in an area of 1,120 sq.m., may be built on the plot. Service areas, as specified in the Urban Building Plans, may also be erected.

In addition to the amount paid for the land, the successful bidder will pay Moriah Jerusalem Development Co. Ltd. the above development costs, which are linked to building index for December 1993 (published on January 15, 1994). Payment will be made on the basis of the last known index figure, at the time of payment.

Development costs do not include NIS 6,632 per apartment or commercial unit, for connection to the electricity supply.

In addition, the successful bidder will be required to pay any fees and levies to the local authorities.

* Not including VAT.

The Israel Lands Administration reserves the right to accept any bid, or to reject all bids, including the highest.

The tender booklet will be available from May 5, 1994, on submission of a receipt from the Post Bank for NIS100 (cash only, including VAT), for payment into Israel Lands Administration account 0-24180-0, per booklet. The booklets will be available at the Israel Lands Administration, 34 Rehov Ben Yehuda, Jerusalem (13th floor), ☎ 02-254121, during regular working hours.

A bank check or bank guarantee of 10% of the bid total should be attached to bids as deposit.

Last date for submitting bids: June 9, 1994 (12 noon). A bid not found in the tenders box when it is opened, whatever the reason, cannot be considered.

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German mark	1.8081	1.8336	1.78	1.86	1.8194
Pound sterling	4.5022	4.5823	4.41	4.63	4.5372
French franc	0.5278	0.5354	0.51	0.54	0.5408
Japanese yen (100)	2.9438	2.9854	2.89	3.03	2.9596
Dutch florin	1.6103	1.6320	1.58	1.68	1.6203
Swiss franc	2.1229	2.1528	2.09	2.19	2.1362
Swedish krona	0.3907	0.3962	0.38	0.40	0.3928
Norwegian krona	0.4188	0.4227	0.41	0.43	0.4228
Danish krone	0.4614	0.4679	0.45	0.48	0.4642
Finnish mark	0.5574	0.5653	0.55	0.57	0.5627
Canadian dollar	2.1872	2.1877	2.12	2.15	2.1728
Australian dollar	2.1118	2.1418	2.07	2.19	2.1252
S. African rand	0.8432	0.8551	0.81	0.83	0.8506
Belgian franc (100)	0.8787	0.8821	0.87	0.91	0.8837
Austrian schilling (10)	2.5508	2.6089	2.53	2.65	2.5857
Italian lire (1000)	1.8799	1.9065	1.84	1.95	1.8901
Jordanian dinar	—	—	4.12	4.12	4.2314
Egyptian pound	—	—	—	0.86	0.91
ECU	3.4872	3.5386	—	—	3.6107
Irish punt	4.3979	4.4620	4.30	4.36	4.4262
Spanish peseta (100)	2.2101	2.2414	2.15	2.20	2.2206
* These rates vary according to bank. ** Bank of Israel.					
SOURCE: BANK LEUMI					

Drug firms push tie-ups to face harsh new world

LONDON, May 3 (Reuters) — The world's leading drug companies, under pressure as never before from falling prices and slowing sales, are reshaping themselves through takeovers and alliances.

Anglo-American giant SmithKline Beecham Plc yesterday unveiled plans to buy US drug distributor Diversified Pharmaceutical Services (DPS) for \$2.3 billion.

Eastman Kodak Co. also announced it would sell its drug unit Sterling Winthrop, a move which its French partner Elf Sanofi said presented an opportunity to merge the two businesses.

On Monday, Roche of Switzerland

launched an agreed \$5.3b. takeover bid for Syntex Corp of the US.

Share analysts said the moves underlined the growing urgency among companies in the \$200b.-a-year global industry to shore up profitability.

"We all know that the environment in which we work is changing rapidly," said SmithKline chief executive Jan Leschly. "The winners will position themselves to capitalize upon those changes. Those who fail to adapt will lose."

Share analysts predicted further tie-ups were inevitable in the fragmented drugs industry, where the global leader, Merck

and Co. Inc., has a market share of less than five percent.

"I think everybody is expecting there to be another round of consolidation in the industry as a result of the pricing pressures that companies are coming under," said Andrew Porter of stockbroker UBS.

Companies like Upjohn Co. and Marion Merrell Dow Inc. in the US, and Britain's Fisons Plc, who are struggling to replace aging drugs from a weak research pipeline, are seen as possible takeover targets.

But the industry-wide shake-up will not be limited to the kind of full mergers that created SmithKline Beecham and Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. in the

1980s, analysts believe.

Many companies will opt instead for alliances designed to spread themselves across the sector, from drug production to distribution.

SmithKline's purchase of DPS, and Pfizer Inc.'s link-up with another so-called Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM), Value Health Inc., also announced yesterday, are aimed at just this.

PBMs play an increasingly important role in the US market, deciding which medicines are purchased by health care providers covering some 40 million Americans.

Driving the trend to consolidation

is the realization among industry executives that they must strengthen their position if they are to make researching and developing new drugs pay.

It costs on average of around \$250m. to bring a new pharmaceutical product to market. In a major report just out, analysts at US investment bank Lehman Bros. calculate that the world drugs market needs to grow by 9.4% a year for the rest of the decade to generate a "satisfactory" 10% return on R & D investment.

In fact, Lehman predicts that sales growth will slow from an annual rate of 11.5% over the

past five years to 5% over the next five.

And its stark conclusion is that the international drugs industry needs to save \$40b. a year in costs — requiring a 10%-20% cut in the work force, or 100,000-200,000 job losses.

Investors in London were cheered yesterday by the frenzy of corporate activity in the drug sector, dogged for the past two years by gloom over health care reforms.

SmithKline's "A" shares jumped 22 1/2p to 412p by early afternoon in reaction to what analysts said was an excellent deal with DPS. Glaxo Holdings Plc

also gained, up 12 1/2p to 589, as analysts waited its expected move in the US.

Underpinning the bullish reaction was satisfaction at the near-60% premium paid by Roche for Syntex.

"If the value [of drug companies] is not clear to the stock market in general, it certainly is to some of the people in the industry," said Guy Wood-Gush of London stockbroker Barclays de Zoete Wedd.

However, investors in Roche were less impressed. The company's share certificates slipped Sfr 25 to 6.695 each on talk it may have paid too much.

Kodak to sell Sterling, other divisions

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (Reuters) — Eastman Kodak Co., moving to focus exclusively on its imaging businesses, said yesterday it will sell Sterling Winthrop Inc., its pharmaceutical and consumer health products unit, as well as other divisions.

The businesses, which currently generate about \$3.7 billion of the company's annual revenues, include Kodak's personal care and household products business, L&F Products, and the Clinical Diagnostics Division.

Kodak did not disclose specific details for the divestitures.

But it noted that Sterling's partner, Elf Sanofi, has the right of first refusal to buy the pharmaceutical alliance portion of the business.

The photographic giant will retain its X-ray, film, and electronics-based medical, cardiology, and dental diagnostic imaging businesses, the Health Sciences Division.

It said the unit plays a vital role in its imaging strategy.

"Our goal is to divest these businesses in an orderly and responsible manner that optimizes value for Kodak," said George Fisher, Kodak's chief executive officer.

"It's not going to be business as usual," he added. "There is a new Kodak, and it is moving swiftly and aggressively to achieve profitable growth."

"He had to do it. He doesn't have the cash flow to get rid of his debt quickly enough," said analyst Brenda Landry at Morgan Stanley.

Kodak, industry analysts say, has about \$6 billion in debts.

Landry said the sales could make Kodak debt-free and eliminate substantial spending on research and development.

"It's the right thing," she said. In a statement announcing the move, Fisher said the company will focus on boosting returns on its net assets.

Industry analysts had predicted that Sterling could be a candidate for sale, especially after a sharp rise in drug stocks propelled by news Monday that Roche Holding Ltd. had agreed to pay \$5.3 billion for Syntex Corp.

Drug companies, faced with a tough US market and likely heavier cost controls from Washington, have been looking for partners.

Kodak, which installed Fisher last December to turn around the ailing company, last year spun

off its slow-growing chemicals business.

Analysts said estimating market values on Sterling Winthrop and the other businesses is difficult since it is a mixed portfolio that includes ethical and over-the-counter medications as well as brand-names, such as Lysol cleanser.

"But he's got to sell now before all the drug companies finish buying each other," Landry said.

The first outsider to head Kodak, Fisher has spent much of the last months studying the world's largest maker of photographic products and meeting its employees.

He has hired a new chief financial officer and consolidated Kodak's electronic imaging businesses into one group.

Kodak earned \$82 million for the first quarter, compared with a massive loss of \$2.02b. a year ago when it took a huge accounting charge to cover employee benefits.

Kodak's stock did not immediately trade on the New York Stock Exchange after the announcement, but it climbed to \$47 on the Instinet system, up \$2.25 from Monday's close.

Roche Holding to acquire Syntex for \$5.3 billion

SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) — Switzerland's Roche Holding Ltd. will acquire Syntex Corp. for \$5.3 billion in cash, creating the world's fourth largest drug firm, company officials said Monday.

Under the agreement, Roche will buy all outstanding stock of the Palo Alto, Calif.-based company for \$24 apiece in cash, 57 percent more than the closing price of Syntex stock on Friday.

Syntex soared \$8.25 on the news to end at \$23.50 on the New York Stock Exchange. Volume was extremely heavy, with more than 32 million shares changing hands in NYSE composite trading.

"If I was a Syntex shareholder, I'd be thrilled," said PaineWebber analyst Ronald Nordmann. "I'd be shocked if anyone else comes along."

Syntex's stock has fallen sharply from a peak \$56 in 1992, due largely to a lack of new drugs. Patents expired last December on its two flagship products, the anti-inflammatory drugs Naprosyn and Anaprox, which at one point generated \$1 billion in sales, or half the company's revenues.

The company was forced to cut the prices sharply for its anti-in-

flammatory drugs to compete with a host of generic brands that then hit the market.

Syntex Chairman Paul Freiman said the patent expiration and consolidation in the drug industry led him to embrace the merger with a big international company.

"This is a bittersweet moment ... and I shed a tear or two — literally — but on the other hand we have to deal with reality," Freiman said.

Syntex would become a subsidiary of Roche, which would then have the sixth-largest share in the US drug market.

Freiman said the merger will ensure the company has the financing to develop new products.

Syntex and Roche have worked together since 1990 to promote the California company's anti-inflammatory drug, Toradol in the United States.

Roche Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Fritz Gerber said Syntex's leadership in painkillers and anti-inflammation drugs would "ideally complement" Roche's drug operations. The Basel, Switzerland-based company also makes vitamins, fragrances and flavors.

SmithKline agrees to buy Diversified Pharmaceutical

LONDON (Reuters) — Leading drugs group SmithKline Beecham Plc yesterday moved to shore up its position in the global health care market with an agreement to buy Diversified Pharmaceutical Services Inc. (DPS) for \$2.3 billion.

SmithKline chief executive Jan Leschly said "the unique alliance announced today positions us to win."

DPS, a wholly-owned subsidiary of United Healthcare Corp., is one of the largest and fastest growing pharmaceutical benefit management companies in the US, managing pharmaceuticals benefits for almost 11 million people.

Leschly said in a statement that the deal put his company to the forefront of pharmaceutical benefit management with a long-standing industry leader.

SmithKline "A" shares firmed 22p on the news to 411.5p with analysts saying the deal was clearly prompted by Merck and Co Inc.'s \$6.0 billion merger with Medco Containment Services last year, a similar but larger

company to DPS.

"It will be seen as a good strategic deal and a good deal at a decent price," said Mark Clark, analyst at Nomura Research.

DPS has a network of about 30,000 fully licensed pharmacies across the US.

SmithKline and United Healthcare also agreed a minimum six-year alliance through which SmithKline would have exclusive rights to data for disease management from the 1.6 million members of health management organizations owned by United Healthcare.

SmithKline said the acquisition would be funded by the issue of commercial paper and existing cash reserves and result in no material dilution of SmithKline earnings per share for 1994.

It said the deal offers it the opportunity to move beyond its traditional role of discoverer, developer and manufacturer of pharmaceutical products towards a new role as a manager of health care.

US Index of Leading Indicators surges

WASHINGTON (Reuters) — The US government's key economic forecasting gauge surged upward in March after two months of sluggishness caused by severe winter weather, the Commerce Department said yesterday.

The Index of Leading Indicators, which is supposed to forecast economic trends six to nine months ahead, gained 0.7% after being flat in February and rising only 0.3% in January.

The rise added to signs the economy was bouncing back from a harsh winter and may be poised for significantly stronger growth in the spring months.

The leading index measures a basket of economic indicators, from unemployment benefit claims to building permits. Nine of its 11 components gained in March, led by a longer workweek.

Commerce Department officials said the average workweek lengthened in March to 42.2 hours, the longest since World War II as manufacturing industries gained strength.

Previously, the department said the February leading index fell 0.1% and that the measure rose 0.4% in January. The index has not declined since last July.

There are ample signs that the economy is expanding, including a report Monday from the National Association of Purchasing Management that its manufacturing index posted an eighth straight rise in April.

Growth in heavy industry moved ahead after stabilizing in March and brought with it the first increase in manufacturing employment in more than five years, said Robert Bretz, chairman of the association's survey committee.

In addition, the Commerce Department said Monday that construction spending rose 0.8% in March after two months of weather-related declines.

Besides a longer workweek, other positive indicators in March were lower commodity prices, more building permit applications, fewer unemployment insurance claims, rising order backlogs, and more consumer goods orders.

Plant and equipment orders also increased from February levels, consumers grew more optimistic and the money supply increased.

The two negative indicators were faster vendor deliveries and lower stock prices.

The economy grew at a 2.6% annual rate in the first quarter this year, down sharply from a 7% rate of expansion in gross domestic product during the final three months of 1993.

But bad weather and the California earthquake in January slowed first-quarter GDP and recent economic signals point to a significantly stronger second quarter.

The department said its index of coincident indicators — which measures current economic activity — increased 0.4% in March after a 0.7% gain in February.



Chung Ju-yung, founder and chairman of the giant Hyundai group, announces his retirement from business yesterday. Convicted of diverting \$60 m. of company money into an abortive presidential campaign, he has been under government pressure to quit. (AP)

Platinum first to move after S. African election

LONDON (Reuters) — Platinum and palladium prices jumped yesterday, spurred on by the outcome of the first all-race elections in key producer South Africa, but traders warned that the rises could fast disappear.

Palladium was fixed at a nine-month high of \$139.75 an ounce, up \$3 from Friday, while platinum rose \$5 to over \$400 an ounce. But gold, whose prospects are far more cloudy, fell close to \$1 to be set at \$375.70.

"South Africa is still a bit up in the air. The prices are being moved more by a spillover from silver prices," said Robert Weinberg, mining analyst with stockbroker S. G. Warburg.

Traders said the latest gains in platinum looked artificial since neither mine nor refinery production had been affected by the election, results of which so far show the African National Congress of Nelson Mandela ahead with 63% of the vote.

"There was a bit of a sell-off last week when the elections seemed to be going so smoothly. Perhaps the market got itself a bit short," one dealer said.

Other dealers said Japanese trade houses had been steady buyers of platinum last week on fears that supplies would be at risk once

an ANC-led government took power in South Africa.

About 75% of world platinum supply is mined in South Africa while Japan accounts for 55% of total demand.

South Africa also produces about 20% of world gold. Platinum is used in emission catalysts for cars powered by lead-free petrol, and in electronics and jewelry, especially in Japan.

With Japan, platinum's largest market closed for the Golden Week holiday, one dealer expressed surprise that platinum had risen to over \$400.

"Platinum could hold \$400, although it might give a bit back before it makes any further headway," a dealer said.

The rise in palladium prices was better based, dealers said, though it had less to do with South Africa as Russia is the dominant producer with about 75% of the market against some 25% from South Africa. The metal is used in chemical and electronic applications as well as in exhaust catalysts.

"We have seen good strong industrial demand for several weeks which has not fully come through to the price," one dealer said. The buying had led to a shortage of material in Europe.

Sterling braced for Major mishap at British polls

LONDON (Reuters) — The pound will stand its ground in tomorrow's British local elections even if voters give Prime Minister John Major's government a bloody nose, economists said. Months of squabbling in the ruling Conservative Party, and a stream of humiliating scandals mean the markets expect to see Major embarrassed in local council polls.

"We've been focusing on the political wobbles for some time now, haven't we? I don't think the markets will get taken by surprise," said Jurgien Lindemann, head of foreign exchange at British bank Standard Chartered in London.

Tony Norfield, treasury economist at Dutch bank ABN Amro agreed. "We can't ignore the fact there is already a risk premium built into sterling interest rates and at around DM 2.50, it can't be said that sterling is massively overvalued."

Adrian Cunningham, senior currency economist at Swiss bank UBS in London, said people appeared to expect the Conservatives to be trounced.

But he said, "The numbers are good and we're at a sweet spot in the economic cycle, with good growth, low inflation and the current account not a significant problem yet."

Fears earlier this year that consumer confidence would "fall off a precipice" in the wake of April tax

changes had been overdone, he said. "As a result the scope on economic grounds for further interest rate cuts are now very limited."

He still expected Britain to lower rates once more but later in the year, possibly at the start of June before European Parliament elections on June 12.

Lindemann at Standard Chartered said the view that interest rate cuts were at least on hold for now was widespread. "I think that is a bigger factor now than the UK elections."

Once both the May and June polls are past, political concerns may start to creep into the pound again, although Cunningham said he thought any serious doubt over Major's leadership is unlikely until September.

Analysts say Major may face a leadership challenge later this year if his party suffers too badly at the local and European election polls.

"John Major is vulnerable and there's a threat to his premiership, but for the time being the market has already priced a lot of it in," he said.

But Mark Austin, currency economist at Midland Global Markets, said he is not sure the market had discounted the political risk for sterling this week.

"The politics have gone a little quiet. I think if it's as bad as it might be, it will still be negative

for the pound," Austin said. Sterling slipped slightly to DM 2.4900 and \$1.5110 compared with DM 2.5095 and \$1.5175 on Monday.

For UBS' Cunningham, the near term risk to sterling lay more in what was happening elsewhere on the currency markets.

WORLD BRIEFS

Wella profits up 17%: Germany's Wella AG, the world's leading supplier of professional hair care products, said yesterday it had defied Europe's recession to achieve a 17% rise in group net profit in 1993.

Management board chairman Peter Zuehlendorf told a news conference that business in Europe had been difficult, particularly in Germany, but this was offset by the benefits of cost-cutting and growth in the Americas and South-East Asia.

Wella said its profit rose to DM 106.1m. in 1993 from DM 90.7m. a year earlier, a growth rate which far outpaced a 4.6% rise in group sales to DM 2.87b. *Reuters*

Disney to launch cruise business: Walt Disney Co. said yesterday it will launch a new cruise vacation business aimed at giving families the chance to mingle with Mickey Mouse and other characters on the high seas.

The cruises will be part of a week-long Disney vacation providing three or four days at sea and the remainder of the week at Walt Disney World Resort in Florida. The cruise will also offer one day at a Disney private island.

Cruises will include activities for all age-groups, Disney said. It gave no pricing information. *Reuters*

Stora announces sharp turnaround: Stora AB, one of Sweden's major forestry products groups, yesterday announced a sharp turnaround in first quarter results helped by one-off gains.

Stora made a profit after net financial items of \$134m. after a \$10m. loss in the first quarter of 1993. The figure was in line with market expectations. *Reuters*

EU threatens legal action on steel subsidies: The European Commission yesterday threatened to take legal action if steel companies do not provide information quickly about how they are using subsidies that were approved in December.

The commission is still missing information on three companies in violation of a condition imposed by European Union industry ministers when they authorized a package of steel subsidies, a commission official said. *Reuters*

Britain to leave rates alone: A big rise in British M0 money supply in April suggests that economic growth has not so far suffered from the personal tax increases that took effect last month, economists said yesterday.

If that is the case, Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke and Bank of England Governor Eddie George will almost certainly agree to leave interest rates unchanged at their monthly monetary meeting today, the economists said. *Reuters*

DnB posts first quarter profit: Den norske Bank, Norway's biggest commercial bank, confirmed a return to health yesterday with a swing to first quarter profits, helped by a sharp contraction in losses on lending.

The state-controlled bank had a net profit of \$81.9m. after a loss of \$19.3m. in the same period of 1993. The bank made profits in the rest of 1993, ending with a net profit of \$131.7m. *Reuters*

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Coventry hands title to Utd

LONDON (Reuters) - Manchester United clinched their second successive Premier League championship on Monday when nearest rivals Blackburn lost 2-1 at Coventry.

Defender Julian Darby finally ended Blackburn's dogged challenge for the title with a goal in each half. Blackburn was left trailing the champions by five points with only one game remaining after Monday's defeat.

Kenny Dalglish's team had to settle for the consolation of a UEFA Cup place next season - their first venture into European competition.

Coventry rocked Blackburn when Darby put them ahead after just 11 minutes.

But Blackburn kept its nerve and equalized in the 29th minute when England defender Graeme Le Saux scored his second goal of the season with a cracking drive from well outside the box.

Darby, a mid-season buy from Bolton who had

scored only three goals for Coventry before Monday, sank Dalglish's side with a second goal in the 55th minute.

Unmarked in the penalty area, Darby slipped the ball under goalkeeper Tim Flowers' hands after Blackburn defenders' attempts to clear a cross landed at his feet.

Blackburn, depleted by injuries, threw defender Colin Hendry up front to partner Alan Shearer but to no avail.

Manchester United will celebrate their triumph at Old Trafford tonight when they take on relegation-threatened Southampton.

United captain Steve Bruce said: "It's a fantastic achievement for everybody concerned."

Dalglish said: "Congratulations to Alex Ferguson and Manchester United. They stayed the course better than us. The Blackburn lads have given us a lot of enjoyment and a lot of pride this season."

Sharks, Canucks snatch road wins

TORONTO (AP) - The San Jose Sharks and Vancouver Canucks opened the Western Conference semifinals Monday night in the best way possible - winning on the road.

The Sharks, who shocked Western Conference top seed Detroit in the first round, resumed their playoff run with a 3-2 victory at Toronto.

The Canucks opened their conference semifinal with a 6-4 victory at Dallas to continue their fine play on the road. They advanced to the second round with an overtime win in Game 7 at Calgary, the Pacific Division winner.

Both series will resume tonight. Last night, two games were scheduled in the Eastern Conference - Washington at New York and Boston at New Jersey. New York and Boston each leads its best-of-7 series 1-0.

Sharks 3, Maple Leafs 2
Johan Garpenlov scored the tie-breaking goal with 2:16 remaining for the Sharks, who had the most record among the 16 teams that made the playoffs.

Canucks 6, Stars 4
Martin Gelinas produced the game-winning goal when he scored off a faceoff with 4:39 to play.

Nathan Lafayette won the faceoff and passed the puck directly on the

stick of Gelinas. Gelinas sent a 25-foot slap shot past goaltender Darcy Wakuluk's stick side after the Stars had rallied from a three-goal deficit to tie it at 4.

NHL Playoff Glance
(Semifinals, best-of-7)
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Boston leads New Jersey 1-0
NY Rangers lead Washington 1-0

WESTERN CONFERENCE
Monday's results:
San Jose 3, Toronto 2
Colorado 12, St. Louis 2
Vancouver 6, Dallas 4
Vancouver leads series 1-0

Last night's scheduled games
Boston at New Jersey
Washington at NY Rangers

Prost: More Formula 1 safety measures needed

IMOLA, Italy (Reuters) - Alain Prost may lead a new crusade for Formula One safety in the wake of the deaths of Ayrton Senna and Roland Ratzenberger at the San Marino Grand Prix.

The four times world champion, who was always regarded as Senna's greatest rival, was unable to comment immediately on the death of his former McLaren team mate on Sunday.

But hours earlier, in the wake of Austrian Ratzenberger's high-speed crash in final qualifying, he had launched a stinging attack on the authorities and the drivers for their apathy on safety.

He blamed the authorities, the teams and the drivers for the accidents which produced the first fatalities at a grand prix for 12 years.

Speaking shortly before the start of the race which claimed Senna's life, Prost said: "For many years, when I was driving I was trying to get the drivers together to talk safety, but many of the leading drivers, still active, didn't want to listen to me."

Senna replaced Prost as the Williams-Renault team's number one driver last winter when the Frenchman retired.

"But something should have been done and needs to be done. The FIA (International Motoring Federation) could change things for safety and so could the team managers, but they have not. Now everything is done for business, for

money, and nothing for sport."

"The drivers are so well paid, they are not supposed to say anything. The dialogue that should have existed between the sporting authority, the teams and the drivers over safety has not existed for a long time."

For many years, Prost was Formula One's most outspoken driver on safety matters and appeared to be the natural successor to Briton Jackie Stewart and Lauda as the drivers' leader and spokesman.

Theories abound on the reasons for Senna's accident. Some suggest that the crash on the starting grid and the subsequent introduction of the safety car, meant that the cars' tires were not properly warmed up when racing resumed after five laps.

"This would have resulted in the tires operating at lower pressures than usual for flat-out racing, a crucial factor which may have been why Senna was unable to control his car, according to Benetton engineer Frank Dernie."

Other explanations suggested that debris from the crash on the grid had not been cleared properly from the track and that Senna's Williams may have suffered a puncture or a mechanical fault of some sort.

There was also speculation that Senna, in his determination to stay ahead under pressure from Schumacher, drove too fast, taking the car beyond his ability to control it.

Moxon's unbeaten 161 leads Yorkshire win

LONDON (Reuters) - Yorkshire captain Martyn Moxon guided his side to its first county championship win at Old Trafford since 1978 with a blistering unbeaten 161 on Monday.

Moxon's innings earned Yorkshire a seven-wicket win with three overs to spare after Lancashire skipper Mike Watkinson had set

them a target of 305 off a maximum 74 overs.

Yorkshire was always in command after Moxon and Michael Vaughan had put on 144 for the first wicket.

Moxon scored his first 50 off 66 balls, reached his century off 139 deliveries and his 150 off 202 balls with 22 fours.



SECOND-DEGREE LARCENY - Cubs SS Shawn Dunston applies late tag as Reds' Kelly swipes second. New Chicago uniforms failed to stop home skid.

Streiking Expos close gap on Braves

MONTREAL (AP) - Ken Hill survived a shaky first inning to win his third straight game and the Montreal Expos used a 19-hit attack to defeat Los Angeles 10-5 on Monday for their sixth consecutive victory.

Hill (5-1) gave up three runs on four hits in the first but no other hits until Mike Piazza's single in the eighth. He retired 20 of 21 batters during the stretch, with only Brett Butler reaching on an error.

Hill worked 7 1/2 innings, struck out eight and walked one. The Dodgers made two costly mistakes as Montreal scored five times off Kevin Gross (0-1).

The Expos, 4-9 on April 20, in last place and 8 1/2 games behind Atlanta (13-1), have gone on a torrid win streak since then. In the last 13 days, Atlanta has been 2-8 and Montreal 11-1 to lift the Expos into second place, 1/2 game out.

Reds 9, Cubs 6
John Smiley pitched a two-hitter and Cincinnati beat Chicago, sending the embarrased Cubs to their club-record 11th straight home loss.

The Cubs remained winless at home this season. Not even a change in uniform could change the Cubs' luck.

On Sunday, they had tied the 1974 club record of 10 straight losses at Wrigley. The Cubs came out in blue jerseys instead of their traditional white - the only time they've ever worn anything but white at Wrigley - but it didn't matter.

AMERICAN LEAGUE
Figures 10, Rangers 8
Pinch-hitter Kirk Gibson connected for a three-run homer with one out in the bottom of the 10th inning.

The Tigers blew a 7-3 lead in the ninth inning, and fell behind 8-7 in the 10th on Doug Strange's single. But Detroit rallied for its third straight victory, its longest winning streak of the season.

Eric Davis led off the Tigers' 10th with a single against Tom Henke (1-3) and Junior Felix walked. After pinch-hitter Mickey Tettleton popped out, Gibson batted for Chris Gomez and homered to left-center field.

A day earlier, Gibson also hit a three-run homer, a shot that hit the right-field roof and bounced out of Tiger Stadium.

Mike Gardiner (1-1) was the winner.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division	W	L	Pct.	GB
Baltimore	15	7	.682	-
New York	15	8	.625	2 1/2
Toronto	14	11	.560	4
Detroit	9	14	.391	8

Central Division	W	L	Pct.	GB
Cleveland	13	10	.565	-
Chicago	13	11	.542	1/2
Minnesota	12	11	.520	1 1/2
Kansas City	11	11	.500	1 1/2
Minnesota	10	16	.385	4 1/2

West Division	W	L	Pct.	GB
Seattle	11	13	.458	-
Texas	10	13	.435	1/2
California	9	17	.346	3
Oakland	8	17	.320	3 1/2

Rodman suspended for playoff brawl

NEW YORK (AP) - Dennis Rodman and three other players have been suspended for a night off, courtesy of the NBA.

Rodman of San Antonio, Douglas Edwards of Atlanta and Keith Askins and Grant Long of Miami were given suspensions of varying lengths and were fined Monday as the league responded to a number of violent incidents in playoff games over the weekend.

Twelve other players were fined \$2,500 apiece by Rod Thorn, the NBA's vice president of operations.

The four suspended players were scheduled to miss games last night as the Spurs-Jazz and Heat-Hawks series resumed. Both were tied 1-1.

Rodman, the NBA rebounding leader in the regular season, was suspended for one game and fined \$10,000 for his actions during the Spurs' loss to Utah on Saturday.

Rodman drew a flagrant foul for taking a swing at Karl Malone's head after an unsuccessful attempt at blocking Malone's shot. He was ejected in the fourth quarter for trash talking at the Jazz bench about two minutes after his knee-and-hip check sent John Stockton sprawling.

The collision left Utah's point guard with a bruised thigh, but he was expected to play last night.

Thorn charged Rodman with another flagrant foul Monday after reviewing videotape of the incident.

The wild free-for-all in the Atlanta-Miami game brought longer suspensions.

Askins got three games and a \$15,000 fine for coming off the bench and punching Edwards in the back of the head during a third-quarter fight in Saturday's Atlanta victory that tied the best-of-5 series 1-1.

Edwards was suspended for two games and fined \$10,000 for hitting Askins in the jaw. Long, a starting forward for Miami, was suspended for one game and fined \$10,000 for initiating the incident. He fouled Atlanta's Duane Ferrell on a drive, then tried to choke Ferrell after the Hawks player said something to Edwards about the harshness of the foul.

Atlanta's Danny Manning, Adam Keefe, Stacey Augmon, Andrew Lang, Paul Graham and Ennis Whitely and Miami's Willie Burton, Matt Geiger, Alec Kessler, Harold Miner, John Saley and Brian Shaw each were fined \$2,500 for leaving the bench during the incident.

Each team was fined \$30,000, and the penalties totaled \$125,000, short of the league record of \$162,500.

Hendry beats White again for world snooker crown

SHEFFIELD (Reuters) - Stephen Hendry of Scotland won his fourth world snooker title and dealt luckless Englishman Jimmy White yet another heartbreak with an 18-17 triumph in the final on Monday.

The defeat for White, after he looked to be in a winning position in the deciding 35th frame, was his fifth successive loss in the final and his sixth overall. He has never won the title.

"It's beginning to annoy me," White, 32 on Monday but without the birthday present he most wanted, said with a half-smile afterwards.

White, who leveled the two-day match 17-17 with a break of 75 in the 34th frame, looked to have a winning chance with the balls open in the decider.

But he missed an angled black after making 29 points and Hendry cleared up for an 82-37 triumph to win the title for the third successive year and the fourth time in five years.

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Thai Princess Galyani Vedhana is saluted by a Thai worker during her visit to the Almog Holiday Village at the Dead Sea yesterday. (Ariel Jerolimski)

Ben-Porat asked to probe Rabin's refusal to sign anti-smoking amendment

JUDY SIEGEL

THE Society for the Prevention of Smoking has asked State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat to look into Acting Health Minister Yitzhak Rabin's refusal to sign an amendment to bar smoking in the country's 60,000 work places. The society is also planning a major anti-smoking campaign in the haredi community.

Amos Hausner, the society's director and legal adviser, said it is unprecedented that an amendment initiated by a ministry and approved by the requisite Knesset committee should not be formally signed by the minister in charge. Rabin's refusal has elicited strong protests from a number of organizations here and abroad, including Hadassah-Israel and the roof organization of European cancer associations.

Rabin's aides have refused to comment on the matter, except to say that the premier, as a heavy smoker, would feel "hypocritical" about signing a ban on smoking in the work place (each would be allowed to set aside special smoking rooms).

An assistant to Ben-Porat would not comment directly, but did say the matter is being looked into as part of the office's regular examination of government functioning.

Meanwhile, the anti-smoking society has met with a Health Ministry official and the head of Rafah, the Association for Medicine According to Halacha, to launch an anti-smoking campaign in the

haredi community. Rafah head Rabbi Yehoshua Scheinberger, Hausner, and ministry health promotion chief Dr. Dov Tamir met on Monday to discuss the campaign. It was agreed that they would assemble a group of medical experts who would declare in writing that smoking is deadly and ask respected rabbis to speak out against the habit. Scheinberger said he is asking major poskim (rabbinical arbiters) to declare that it is not only forbidden to smoke, but also for shops and kiosks to sell cigarettes.

"We want people to know that selling cigarettes is no different from selling non-kosher food," Scheinberger said. If Rabbi Moshe Blau, the Bnei Brak rabbi who on Pesach issues a "kashrut certificate" to Dubek cigarettes, does so again, major poskim will declare in writing that such approval is not only impossible but also forbidden, Scheinberger said.

The organizations will also place anti-smoking advertisements in the haredi press - paid for by the Health Ministry - and set up stands in religious neighborhoods in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak to persuade passersby of the dangers of smoking. Plans are being made to set up special study areas for non-smokers in the most prestigious Jerusalem yeshivot. Scheinberger said. Of the 5,000 Israelis who die from smoking each year, a disproportionate number are religious men.

Ta'as workers march on Rabin's office

BATSHEVA TSUR

WORKERS at the Israel Industries (Ta'as) plant in Jerusalem's Beit Hakerem quarter yesterday marched down Herzl Boulevard to the Prime Minister's Office to protest the plant's closure.

Police tried to disperse the more than 1,000 demonstrators who held up traffic on the busy thoroughfare, which leads to the exit from the city.

The demonstrators were joined by family members and representatives of other Ta'as plants, as well as the workers' committees of large Jerusalem enterprises according to Giora Shpitzer, chairman of the Beit Hakerem plant's workers' committee.

"Only five months ago, management asked us to cut personnel by 50%. We sent 250 people home," Shpitzer said yesterday. "We hold [Director-General] Dr. Gabi Kommissar responsible for Ta'as's economic woes," he said, adding that the concern was \$30 million in debt last year.

"We also agreed to 20 percent wage cuts but management refused to invest in the Beit Hakerem plant," he said. "This despite the fact that the plant, which manufactures parts for aircraft, continued to get new orders from Lockheed, McDonnell Douglas, the US navy, Boeing and others." "There can be only one explanation for this: management wants the money for the land on which the plant is located, valued at \$30 million," Shpitzer said. He added that the Beit Hakerem plant had received the Preferred Supplier Award of McDonnell Douglas in December 1993.

"The idea of liquidating the plant doesn't make sense," Shpitzer added. "For certain parts of the F-15I we are the only supplier in the world." He said that the facility had received \$60m. in orders for the next two years.

Referring to a management suggestion that the plant's projects be transferred to other branches, along with the workers, Shpitzer said: "The projects - including \$22m. project for the US navy - will go down the drain and the government, which has underwritten them, will lose money. The Americans have already asked the management for a detailed alternative plan, and want a list of who will be transferred to Haifa, which is the main alternative we are being offered."

He said that all the workers had signed an agreement stating that they would not cooperate with the transfer of the plant. "We are the seventh most profitable Ta'as plant. Why don't they go to the other 13 first?" Shpitzer asked. "Out of 15,000 workers seven years ago, more than 9,000 have been sent home from Ta'as. This is another one of the many mistakes. We know they have budgeted for firing the Jerusalem staff next year. We will not let one screw leave the facility."

Aviha Ben-Ya'acov, the spokesman for management, refused to comment on the demonstration.

AT least four MKs - Shaul Amor, Avraham Herschson, Rafi Elul and Shlomo Buhbut - appear to have exceeded the maximum outside 1993 income to which they were entitled by law, according to an unofficial appraisal by *The Jerusalem Post*.

Taleb a-Sanaa was the only MK who failed to file his statement by the May 2 deadline.

Yesterday, Knesset Speaker Shevah Weiss made a copy of the MKs' outside income statements for 1993 available to journalists; however, the Knesset's legal department refused to comment or provide legal opinion on which - if any - of the MKs actually broke the law before examining their statements.

An official told the *Post* that the legal department may ask MKs for clarifications before completing their investigation. She added that anyone found to have broken the law will be referred to the Knesset ethics committee which is empowered to apply sanctions.

According to the MKs Immunity Law (Rights and Obligations), MKs may earn the equivalent of half of their annual Knesset salary in outside income - including reimbursement for car, office and travel expenses in their outside jobs. This law does not apply to ministers and deputy ministers.

MKs gross between NIS 130,000 and NIS 180,000 per year for their parliamentary work.

The law, however, only applies to certain types of income. Menahem Porush (United Torah Judaism Party), for example, did not come close to the ceiling, earning an extra NIS 15,650 in account-able income for working in the Central Hotel; however, he made an additional NIS 200,000 in dividends last year as the owner of the same hotel.

Several MKs receive monthly pensions for former jobs in the army, as mayors, etc; this income and revenues from books, articles and lectures are also not included in the accounting.

According to his own testimony, Amor (Likud) earned NIS 127,543 in 1993 from the Knesset, and NIS 81,649 in his job as mayor of Migdal Ha'emek. Amor was not in the Knesset yesterday and was unavailable for comment.

Four MKs may have earned beyond limit in 1993, report indicates

DAN IZENBERG

Herschson (Likud) earned NIS 131,891 from the Knesset and NIS 57,348 from his job as assistant director-general of the National Workers' Union. In addition, he received NIS 29,000 in travel expenses from the March of the Living and NIS 36,000 in office expenses from the NWU.

Herschson told the *Post* that the office expenses did not constitute personal income, but were an estimation of the additional office costs to the NWU accruing from his position. Herschson added that he organized the foreign contingents of students for the annual March of the Living to Poland; the expenses went solely for travel and hotel costs, he said.

Elul (Labor) earned NIS 139,336 from parliament. He also grossed NIS 63,657 from his job as head of the Mazkeret Batya local council (he no longer holds that job) and NIS 8,200 as the director of a company.

He later issued a statement saying that the sum of his outside earnings totaled only NIS 67,517. Buhbut earned NIS 127,569 from the Knesset and NIS 65,068 in salary and expenses in his capacity as head of the Ma'alot-Tarshiha local council.

A large group of MKs took advantage of the law to earn half or close to half of their Knesset salaries in outside work. These included:

- Dalia Itzik (Labor) - NIS 83,168 as deputy mayor of Jerusalem (she no longer holds the job); Itzik actually exceeded her limit by NIS 178.
- Ehud Olmert (Likud) - NIS 64,894 as the director of a company and mayor of Jerusalem.
- Rafi Edri (Labor) - NIS 70,404 as the chairman of two boards of directors.

- Pini Badash (Tsomet) - NIS 66,662 as head of the Omer local council.
- Yosef Ba-Gad (Moleket) - NIS 66,676 as the chief administrator of Nehalim yeshiva.
- Aryeh Deri (Shas) - NIS 29,000 in expenses as president of the Shas-sponsored daily *Yom Leyom*; Deri earned a total of NIS 40,466 as an MK (he served as a minister during most of 1993).
- Yosef Vanunu (Labor) - NIS 66,218 as mayor of Kiryat

Malachi, a job he no longer holds. Vanunu also registered NIS 4,000 in expenses, which could put him over the legal maximum.

- Eliezer Zandberg (Tsomet) - NIS 83,000 as a private lawyer.
- Salah Tarif (Labor) - NIS 69,534 in salary and expenses as head of the Julis local council.
- Ra'anan Cohen (Labor) - NIS 36,557 as a member of the board of directors of three companies (he has since quit two of them).
- Yossi Katz (Labor) - NIS 80,840 as a private lawyer.
- David Mena (Likud) - NIS 69,763 as a private lawyer and NIS 12,445 as a company controller.
- Dan Meridor (Likud) - NIS 79,000 as a private lawyer.
- David Magen (Likud) - NIS 72,822 as a stockholder.
- Yehoshua Matza (Likud) - NIS 50,797 as a director in two companies.
- Ron Nahman (Likud) - NIS 69,747 as mayor of Ariel.
- Avraham Poraz (Meretz) - NIS 51,494 as private lawyer.
- Chaim Kaufman (Likud) - NIS 80,000 as a private consultant.
- Moshe Katsav (Likud) - NIS 48,392 as consultant.
- NIS 18,745 as a director in two companies.
- Ya'acov Shefi (Labor) - NIS 66,641 as an employee of the Israel Aircraft Industries union.
- Dan Tichon (Likud) - NIS 68,791 as an economic consultant.

There were some other noteworthy details emanating from the statements:

- Likud Party chairman Benjamin Netanyahu earned NIS 195,000 from a recent book.
- Former prime minister Yitzhak Shamir earned NIS 95,000 in advances on the foreign publication of his autobiography.
- Tawfik Zayad made no mention of his income as mayor of Nazareth.
- Ariel Sharon did not refer to any income from the farm he owns.
- Several MKs including Tichon, Ya'acov Shamai and Abdul Wahab Darawshe forgot to record their parliamentary salaries.
- Tsomet Party leader Rafael Eitan leased his land in Tel Adashim for NIS 7,500.

Planning council okays northern section of Route 6

LIAT COLLINS

WHILE members of the environmental Green Action group held a protest outside, the National Planning and Construction Council yesterday endorsed the plan for the northern section of the Trans-Israel Highway (Route 6).

Route 6 is planned to connect the north and south with a straight stretch of highway between Sde Boker and Yokne'am, where the road will fork into branches leading to Nahariya and Safed.

The Trans-Israel Road Company, the government firm in charge of construction, claims it will relieve traffic congestion, particularly in the center of the country. Opponents say it will use up open land, cause more building in previously agricultural areas, and lead to air pollution, without solving the problems caused by the growing number of vehicles.

At its largest section, in the Ben Shimon area, it will have eight lanes and 13 huge interchanges.

Life and Environment, the umbrella organization for all the country's green groups, has denounced the plan saying it will cause irreversible damage and will be redundant by the time it is finished. Life and Environment chairman Joseph Tamir has repeatedly called for government encouragement of public transport before building superhighways.

Objections raised at yesterday's meetings focused on the lack of a national environmental impact report, air pollution, and quarrying for road construction material. By treating the plan in sections, instead of as an overall project, the NPCC has bypassed the need for one report covering the entire project, according to officials of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel.

"For a project this size, running nearly the entire length of the country, you need to look at the overall impact first and only afterwards discuss whether the road should run east or west of a spring," said SPNI spokeswoman Orli Nevo.

The Union for Environmental Defense will petition the High Court of Justice to order an environmental impact report, a spokeswoman said. SPNI chairman Yoav Sagi said, "It would have been possible to widen existing roads and prevent the construction of a monster."

Unemployment benefit claims drop in '93

SASHA SADAN

REQUESTS for unemployment benefits dropped by 7 percent in 1993, with an average of 81,000 a month, the National Insurance Institute said yesterday. In 1992, 87,000 requests a month were received.

The NII said that despite the drop, the number of people receiving unemployment compensation is "too high," and the fund covering the cost is running a deficit.

Discharged soldiers represented 15% of those receiving unemployment. 2% less than the previous year. Women represented 52%, while they comprise 40% of the labor force, according to NII figures. Younger workers, those up to age 24, accounted for 20% of those receiving unemployment, but only 15% of the work force. The average monthly amount paid out in such benefits was NIS 1,430.

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Olmert vows to equalize services for Arabs and Jews

BILL HUTMAN

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert yesterday vowed to bring Arab neighborhoods up to par with Jewish neighborhoods, warning that if this isn't done the capital would de facto become a divided city.

Olmert was speaking at a meeting of municipal leaders at which he announced the establishment of a committee to determine how infrastructure and services can be improved in eastern Jerusalem.

"We have the one-sided responsibility to equalize services, that is our unconditional moral responsibility," Olmert said. "We do not expect them to say thanks. They are citizens, who have rights like all citizens, regardless of their ideological or political view."

He said he realized most Arab residents rejected Israeli's authority in Jerusalem.

At the meeting, the municipality released a report showing that conditions - in particular housing and education - in eastern Jerusalem are far below those in western Jerusalem.

"For 27 years, not enough was done to close the gap between the two sectors, and the division became only greater," Olmert said, taking a swipe at the administration of former mayor Teddy Kollek.

"[We have] the slogans of a unified city and the reality of a divided city," Olmert said.

He ordered city manager Ilan Cohen to head the committee that will consult with municipal departments on how to improve conditions in the Arab sector.

Cohen is to decide on the make-up of the committee shortly and report back to Olmert in six to eight weeks.

Ramon threatens libel suit against Habberfeld, Lubelsky

MICHAEL YUDELMAN

MK Haim Ramon, head of the new Life in the Histadrut list, intends to sue the Labor Party's campaign chiefs for libel over the ads published by the pensioners' union, in which Ramon is quoted as saying that pensioners do not contribute anything and that he would not do anything for them.

"The pensioners have nothing to whine about," the ad quotes Ramon as saying. "Their situation is good. They don't contribute anything to the economy yet they get a pension. I won't help them."

These quotes were published last year in *Ha'aretz* by a pensioner, Haim Katz, who claims Ramon made the statements to him.

In a letter to incumbent Histadrut Secretary-General Haim Habberfeld and head of Labor's Histadrut election campaign staff Deputy Minister Masha Lubelsky, Ramon's attorney David Varsky states that these quotes "are groundless, were never said, and present my client in a most negative light. Their publication is causing my client grave damage and are injurious to him."

Ramon demanded that the Labor Party immediately stop the "libelous" ads and that Habberfeld and Lubelsky publish an apology.

A Labor Party spokesman said yesterday that Katz had published Ramon's statements to him quite a while ago, "but Ramon did not bother to react at the time. Apparently it did not disturb him. Now he feels pressured, and with good reason. The truth hurts. Labor also has legal advisers, and would not have published such things without proof."

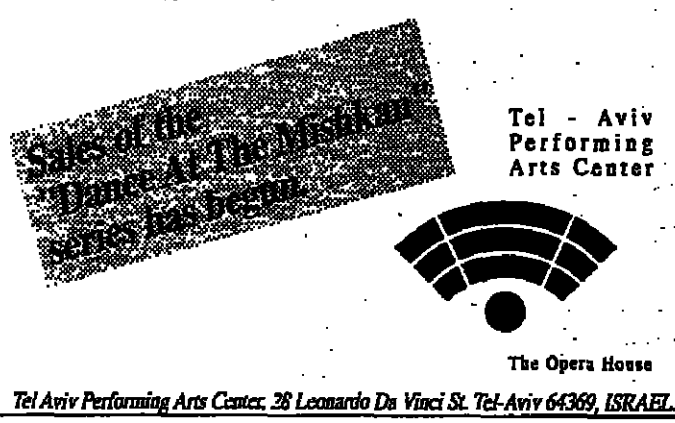
The pensioners' union, representing some 400,000 Histadrut members, yesterday announced that if Ramon is elected Histadrut secretary-general, the pensioners would consider leaving the Histadrut and forming an independent organization.

Union leaders said their votes had saved former Histadrut secretary-general Yisrael Kessar's position, and would provide the majority to keep Habberfeld in power.

The Tel Aviv Performing Arts Center

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Rape suspect released on bail

Zion Zakian, 69, of Herzliya, suspected of raping an autistic woman, was released on NIS 6,000 bail in Tel Aviv Magistrates Court yesterday.

Zakian, a janitor at an institution for autistic people in the center of the country, allegedly gave the woman chewing gum in return for sexual favors.

Police did not object to his release on bail, on condition that he not contact the woman.

The suspect told the court he had only kissed the woman, who did not have her shirt on, in her room at the institution.

Bar-Lev hospitalized for 'general weakness'

Ambassador to Russia Haim Bar-Lev was admitted to the internal-medicine department of Sheba Hospital for tests relating to "general weakness" he has suffering from recently, said Dr. Ya'acov Yahav, of Tel Hashomer Hospital.

Yahav did not provide a diagnosis, but would only say that doctors were trying to find the cause of the problem. Bar-Lev returned this week from Moscow to be admitted to the hospital.

Transplant patient gives birth

An Iranian immigrant has become the first woman here, and one of a handful in the world, to give birth naturally despite having undergone a kidney-pancreas transplant.

Lea Samini, 22, immigrated four years ago suffering from kidney insufficiency due to diabetes. Nearly dead upon arrival, she underwent a double organ transplant at Beilinson Hospital in Petah Tikva. Two days ago she delivered a healthy baby boy weighing 2.4-kilos.

Rishon LeZion job fair draws 2,000

TWO thousand job-seekers attended an employment fair for new immigrants over 45 held yesterday in Rishon LeZion.

Some 40 employers offered 600 jobs at the fair, jointly sponsored by the Employment Service, the Absorption Ministry, the Jewish Agency, the local municipality and the Joint Distribution Committee-Israel.

Winning cards

In yesterday's Mifal Hapayis daily Chance card draw, the lucky cards were the jack of spades, nine of hearts, eight of diamonds and nine of clubs.